

GUNBUSTER • TOREN SMITH • URUSEI YATSURA

# ANIME UK

MAGAZINE



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K.O. CENTURY  
**BEAST WARRIORS**

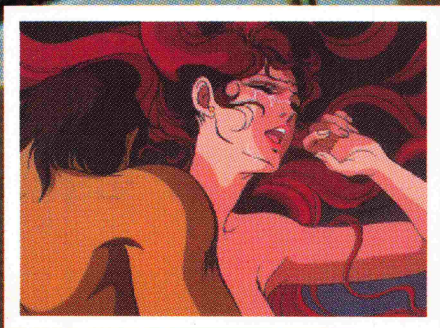


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(In More Ways Than One!)**

# **GUY**

18

**Awakening of The Devil**



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# ANIME UK MAGAZINE

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**VOL 3 • NO 3**

**JANE MOIR**  
Administrator

Elections? What elections are those then?



**HELEN McCARTHY**  
Editor

Elections? Ghengis Khan didn't need no footling elections!



**JOHN SPENCER**  
Designer

Can I vote in somewhere sunny, like South Africa?



**STEVE KYTE**  
Staff Artist

I vote John Tracy as Prime Minister and Sailor Moon as the Minister for Health. They already are?



**PETER GOLL**  
Publisher

Elections? Sod the elections, will it boost our circulation?



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All correspondence to:  
Anime UK Magazine  
3rd Floor • 70 Mortimer Street  
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## KONNICHIIWA!

*"Them as can, do; them as can't, teach."*

This old Northern saying has been varied in theatre circles so that the last half reads "them as can't, criticise." I remember very well the agony of bad notices and the ecstasy of good ones. In any field, the critics who are most respected are those with some understanding of the problems facing those they criticise and the range of possibilities available. In the popular media, the difficulty for critics lies in balancing their duty to the reader to give as fair an assessment as possible for one individual on the information available, against their sympathy for the artist fighting deadlines and budgets to produce work which is both commercially viable and acceptable. It's so easy to let hype and fad rule in mass entertainment, so easy to say that esoteric standards don't matter as long as Joe and Julie Public are buying as if there was no tomorrow; but on the other hand it's hard for music or video companies, turning out a mass product in a mass market, to serve Art and Mammon with equal enthusiasm, especially when Mammon pays so much better.

So what's the critic to do? This magazine has always done its best to be critically fair and to present a balanced picture of the anime scene in Britain as it changes and develops; while always supporting new initiatives from the growing band of UK anime labels, I've given my reviewers the freedom to say what they think, whether it's a popular view or not. We gave ODIN one of its gentlest reviews, many think without justification; we gave CATGIRL : NUKUNUKU one of its sternest. But still that old saying rings in my ears, and there's only one way to answer it. If we're going to carry on telling others where they go wrong, we really have to see if we could do better. So we've put our money where our mouth is.

ANIME UK MAGAZINE is bringing out its first own-label video. Now it's our turn to be Aunt Sallies for the potshots of reviewers. KO CENTURY BEAST WARRIORS is due out any day now and we'll be on the receiving end of the critical gaze...

It'll be an interesting experience!

Yours animatedly,

Helen McCarthy  
Editor



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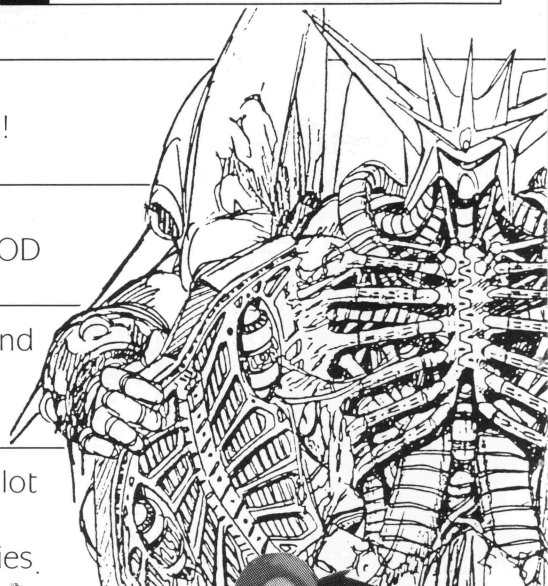
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# NEWSLINE

## TAKAHASHI IN AMERICA! US CONVENTION CIRCUIT HOTS UP

All you Takahashi otaku who want to sit at the feet of the Grand Mistress of Cute should empty your bank accounts and book your ticket to California right away. Takahashi Rumiko is to be a guest of honour at the San Diego Comic Convention taking place from 4-7 August. This is her first visit to a US convention and to celebrate VIZ COMMUNICATIONS are planning three major translated Takahashi anime and manga releases. There'll be almost as many anime stars in California as in Tokyo this summer - San Diego Comicon takes place just two weeks after ANIME AMERICA in San Jose, where Nagai Go heads a strong guest slate, and OTAKON 94 in Philadelphia (29-31 July), while ANIME EXPO is at Anaheim from 1-4 July with Mikimoto Haruhiko and Kitazume Hiroyuki, both missing last summer, leading the guest lineup.

OTAKON 94 has taken the decision to invite American guests whose contributions to anime and manga in the USA have been significant, highlighting their influence on the spread of anime fandom worldwide. It will be a smaller event than the West Coast extravaganzas and aims to emphasise the virtues of small conventions - including relaxation, friendliness and closer contact with the guests than is possible with thousands of attendees. And for forward planners there's KATSUCON ICHI from 17-19 February 1995 in Virginia, with Johji Manabe on the guest list, and the SIXTH edition of America's first anime and animation con. PROJECT A-KON has just celebrated its 5th anniversary in Texas; like OTAKON it focussed this year on the American contribution to anime and manga, and next year's event promised to be just as much fun.

FOR MORE DETAILS WRITE TO :

**ANIME AMERICA 94**, 298 4th Ave., Suite 472, San Francisco, CA 94118, USA

**ANIME EXPO 94**, 2425 B Channing, Suite 684, Berkeley, CA 94704, USA

**KATSU-CON ICHI**, PO Box 11582, Blacksburg, VA 24062-1582, USA

**OTAKON 94**, c/o Bill Johnston, 661-A Waupelani Drive, State College, PA 16801, USA

**PROJECT A-KON**, PO Box 472456, Garland, TX 75047-2456, USA

**SAN DIEGO COMIC CONVENTION**, Conference Center, San Diego, CA, USA

## ECONOMIC CRISIS!

Good news for Bubblegum Crisis fans as Anime Projects will be re-issuing the series (with new covers) at the affordable price of £12.99 (hopefully starting at the end of July, but don't hold your breath...)



## MANGA ENTERTAINMENT TURN DARK HORSES

The demise of MANGA MANIA has been prevented by the sale of the DARK HORSE UK titles to MANGA ENTERTAINMENT LIMITED. Editor Cefn Ridout tells me that there has been a promise of no editorial interference, which given MANGA MANIA's outspoken attitude to the UK anime companies may turn out to be a tough one to keep! Managing Director Liliana Bolton is leaving, otherwise staff remain unchanged.

## DEMOCRACY SAVED?

Following last issue's editorial about video censorship, the Alton/Cook amendment never made it to the House of Commons. Following a Government agreement to tighten up existing law, the amendment providing the "Not Suitable for Home Viewing" category has been withdrawn.

## CHINESE SATELLITE

Recently arrived on the UK airwaves is the Chinese Channel, run by Hong Kong broadcaster TVB. Showing a mix of news, entertainment and documentaries, you can find it on the Astra UK Living channel from midnight to 3 a.m. The service plans to expand over the summer, eventually subscription only, but for now it's free. Because of copyright there are no plans for anime at the moment in spite of its HK popularity, but we can dream can't we? The Chinese Channel, 30-31 Newman Street, London W1P 3PE.

## NEXT UK CONVENTION

DConTanimeT, the third in the Midlands convention series, is to be held from 14-16 October at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham. The team promises EVEN BIGGER video rooms (ie more oxygen, less crush injuries) and EVEN MORE programme, and proposes to pick up the most successful innovation at AUKcon - the fan room - to promote the ever growing range of fan activity. Registration is £20. To register send your cheque plus name and address to Denzil J. Brown, 61 Blackdown Way, Newbury, Berks., RG13 4FX, tel 0635 872941 evenings; for more information send an ssae to Louis Sharman, 13 Prescott Close, Banbury, Oxon., OX16 0RD, or phone 0295 256284 evenings.

RG VEDA CREDIT OMISSION - AN APOLOGY  
PATRICIA A. MUNSON-SITER writes :

I used an RG VEDA script translated by Miho Nishida and published on Internet as a source for my article on RG VEDA in AUK MAGAZINE issue #9. I am normally very careful to credit such sources, but the proper attribution in this article was accidentally omitted. I tender my profoundest apologies to Nishida-san for this oversight.

## ERRATA

And in the Dragonball Z game review last issue, Gremlins swapped the captions for Boiyaku and Zengya!



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## Today's Motto : CUTE IS GOOD

**COMPILER** - I went to the COMPILER event in Kudan Kaikan in February. The voice actresses were GREAT. The same cannot be said of the OAV Part 1. However I did get lots of pictures of the singers, so all was not wasted ...

**PRETTY SOLDIER SAILOR MOON S** - this is a continuation of the series, now into 80+ episodes. There are now 2 new Sailor Senshi : SAILOR URANUS (tall, short blonde hair, dresses as a boy) voiced by TENNOU Haruka, and SAILOR NEPTUNE (slightly shorter, with collar length green hair, KAIYOU Michiru. They look older than the other Senshi. Usagi-chan and company have now aged a year, in keeping with the passage of time. Usagi is now a third-year at middle school (15) - she's still a crybaby though! The new villain is a mad profession and his assistant is the beautifully dangerous Kaori Night. But enough of SAILOR MOON, it's too cute for gajjin!



**AA MEGAMISAMA 5 - FOR THE LOVE OF GODDESS** is 40 minutes long. Release date is May 17, just before the second soundtrack album (see CD review feature for the first OST album) and they will cost you ¥6600 and ¥3000 respectively. You'll need at least 3 buckets for all the tears. On the end of this volume will be a 1-minute trailer for the new Fujishima OAV YOU'RE UNDER ARREST! He wrote this just before AA MEGAMISAMA, it's very cute with lots more mechanics and less whimsy, about two Police Cutes - Miyuki is a mecha-freak, Natsumi is very strong. You only have to wait until autumn for the first of 4 parts, 30 minutes and ¥5500 each.

In March I went to the KSS studios for the alfresco session for AA MEGAMISAMA 5. My friend Hitoshi Doi was my translator for the day but his brain stopped when faced with 3 goddesses! Perhaps this is the difference between merely watching the anime and meeting the character face-to-face? The important question of the day was asked despite having to reboot Hitoshi; Fujishima intimated that maybe it should be 'Ah! My Goddess' and not 'OH! My...' as the Americans are claiming.

## SNIPPETS -

**ELEMENTALORS** is the OAV based on OKAZAKI Takeshi's manga of the same name, a stylish thing about a boy called Kagura who is the incarnation of one of the ELEMENTALORS. Full of pretty women with endless legs, violent dismemberment, Nov 2, 50 minutes and ¥9800 from Sony...

Dinosaurs are in, dinosaurs are cool (it comes from being reptilian) dinosaurs are coming to tv with **JURA-TRIPPER**. 15 pupils get the surprise of their lunchtime when they end up VERY early for school!...

**DEBUT**, one of those soft-porn cutesy PC ENGINE games, is making the jump to OAV, 2 parts, each 29 minutes and ¥5800

**SUPER CATGIRL NUKU-NUKU** phase 06 is due out on May 25, ¥5800 gets you TORIAEZU FINAL. Who knows what's going to happen after they utterly destroyed a family restaurant with heavy artillery in the previous part? ... Fans of TAKADA Yuzo can look forward to seeing his BLUE SEED from MONTHLY COMIC GAMMA on TV soon - I hope it is better than the manga. Comments about the lack of story in 3 x 3 EYES Book N are being withheld ....

**IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLER** fans can expect to see 2 new OAVs in October & November respectively. Lots of talent and a "power up cast from the original TV" **VICTORY GUNDAM** has now finished and is set to be superseded by G-GUNDAM. The young heroes of V (Uso and Shakti) are replaced by Domon CASH and Rain MIKAMURA. Abandon hope all ye who watch ...

**ZEIRAM** has been turned into a 4part OAV series called IRIA : ZEIRAM THE ANIMATION. The characters will look familiar to any fans of VIDEO GIRL AI ....

Did you know that you can now get **CAGLIOSTRO CASTLE** from LINGUA-PHONE? It's ¥9800 and comes with a bilingual script too. I wonder who this Wolf guy is? ....

**RANMA 1/2** OAV 4 ADULT CHANGE HINAKO-SENSEI came out April 21. I've already seen parts 5 & 6 but I won't spoil it for you by telling you how good they are or how long you'll have to wait ....

**OH NO! MORE MACROSS!!!** - **MACROSS PLUS** has precious little to do with the original beyond the name, so it stands a chance of being good. A 4part OAV series from BANDAI/BIG WEST, starting in August. The requisite Space Ace pilot is Isamu DYSON, the music producer is Myun Fan Lowan. The hero's rival is the test pilot Gard Goa Bowman. Myun's assistant is Marge (a bespectacled blond) and who is this girl Lucy? At least the mecha looks cool, if a little impractical.





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**BANG ON TARGET!**  
**A unashamedly otaku view of the best mecha anime ever -**

**by Richard Alldridge and Chris Tilley**

GUNBUSTER : TOP O NERAE! © 1988 Gainax/  
English language version © 1994 Kiseki

For us, GUNBUSTER - AIM FOR THE TOP, produced in 1988 by Studio Gainax, can easily lay claim to being the ultimate mecha show yet produced. It is by turns parody, pastiche and romance, but above all an homage to the entire giant robot genre. Specially created for, and by, fans of the mecha genre, this show wears its influences well, from the fondly remembered milestones of MACROSS, GUNDAM and MAZINGER Z, and even all the way back to IRONMAN NO. 28. What makes GUNBUSTER is the clever lifting, you could almost say plagiarism, of all the best, and cliched, elements from these earlier shows, and making it much more than the sum of its parts. Not just mobile suit 'hardware' mecha, but a semi-transforming modular mecha (just the way they all used to be) which can only be used correctly by the fated heroine, and one she loves. GUNBUSTER is never ashamed to wear its influences in public, even flaunting them, containing elements to please children, adults and those new to anime, yet not forgetting the long established fan, and all with a sense of humour enviable in the age of endless tentacled horror shows.

GUNBUSTER works on many levels. The backdrop is a coruscating space opera on the E.E. 'Doc' Smith scale, with thousands, nay millions, of starships clashing starkly against a backdrop of brilliant suns and darkest nebulae, entire star systems laid waste in an instant by weapons of incalculable power, and an ultimately unreachable indifferent enemy. Centrestage, however, is the standard teenage schoolgirl angst-romance near-soap so beloved of anime production teams. GUNBUSTER also manages to leave behind the show you would probably expect from the opening titles (if you're not paying close enough attention to the spirit of the pre-title sequence), by the end of the first episode. GUNBUSTER is never again so 'light' as the time the heroine spends in school. And we defy you to remain unmoved by the end of the second episode; hardbitten splatter-movie buffs, who can sit through the uncut first UROTSUKIDOJI OAV three times, may find themselves in tears.

At the heart of GUNBUSTER, the central theme - which several characters spend a

great deal of time either fighting desperately against or deliberately ignoring - is the awful truth that you can never return to yourself, you can never go back 'home' again. Some triumph, learn to live with this changing future, others are almost crushed by it. Those who die fulfil a role in the story, without ever seeing the end.

**POLYCHROMATIC EFFULGENCE**

As a classic space opera, GUNBUSTER contains the biggest and best space fleet action ever filmed. Contained in a high-speed montage in the final episode, it shows just some of the fantastic possibilities of animation over live action. SPACE CRUISER YAMATO has attempted similar things on a much smaller scale, but more often than not producers stick to RETURN OF THE JEDI style, keeping the big battlewagons as background and concentrating on fighters. The Battle of Midway (the real one) has a lot to answer for in influencing the style of space combat sequences, with the battle decided by carrier aircraft, and the battleships never coming in sight of each other. The ever escalating conflict throughout the series contains bigger, better and simply more ships and weapons, the enemy fleets increasing by factors of a hundred on each appearance, is an obvious influence from classic E.E. 'Doc' Smith novels, which the LENS-MAN anime never managed to get close to. In contrast, there are also references to more modern depictions of space wars. The relativistic effects, years passing on earth for days or months out in space, and battles over almost before they've even begun, certainly echoes Joe Haldeman's FOREVER WAR novel.

The 'enemy', the Space Terrible Monster Crowd, are fascinating, perhaps the ultimate expression to date of an unreachable, implacable, truly alien foe. There is no other course but to fight them; no attempt can be made to negotiate, or even simply communicate, with them. Only the destruction of one or both sides will resolve the conflict. Even if it means that mankind has to, effectively, kill the Galaxy to survive, humanity resolves to live, whatever the cost! Every alien vessel is a living organism, perhaps a colony creature, incubating in the heart of a star, destroying it in the process. Again paralleling E.E. 'Doc' Smith's ideas, this at first leads man to think of them as a kind of

plague, or verminous parasite. Halfway through the story, however, scientific research leads to the terrifying conclusion that Man is the plague, and the aliens the immune-defence system of the organism known to us as the Galaxy. There are all manner of unpleasant disease subtexts you can read into this, not least the Japanese' deep, and until recently unmentionable, fear of cancer.

# GUNBUSTER :

## SOUND SIGNIFICANCE

No examination of GUNBUSTER would be complete without a word, or rave, about the music. While still having the expected poppy-boppy theme song, the incidental music exhibits a number of references in the style of Ennio Morricone or Carl Stalling, Italian and Warner cartoon soundtrack supremos respectively. For instance, the RX-7 jogging to CHARIOTS OF FIRE, the New World Symphony for Noriko's wake-up call, and Handel's MESSIAH for the climactic battle. Best of all is the highly effective martial theme, which bears more than a passing resemblance to the former Soviet national anthem. And can we get a copy of the soundtrack anywhere?

## HEARTS OF IRON

And then there's the hardware. What is a mecha show without mecha? Do you remember the barrel-chested, elephant-legged giant robots of the sixties and early seventies? Ota Koichi, mecha design supremo, certainly does. Director Anno Hideaki was quoted as saying that "mecha looks better with fewer lines", neatly summarising the whole philosophy of the show. The GUNBUSTER itself is elegant, clean, classic, and absolutely enormous. It also doesn't appear properly until the fourth episode, except for one background shot, not quite what you'd expect from the 'star' of the show. Once again, the philosophy of 'less is more' holds true. Other directors might take us on a long, loving tour of its mechanics and abilities. GAINAX only show what we need to see, making it all the more exciting, and surprising, when a new weapon appears out of the blue. Everything but the Buster-bat! GAINAX seem to have started the latest wave of change, which the resurgence of many old-style mecha would seem to prove.



Mention should also be made of the spaceships, specifically the Luxion, mankind's first faster-than-light cruiser. The 'greenhouse'-style nose is the sort of design Frank Hampson would happily have had a certain Colonel Dare lifting off from the ramps of Interplanet Spacefleet Headquarters on gouts of flame. The Exelion is so big it needs its own subway system to travel around in. The Eltreum,

almost the ultimate expression of mankind's space-combat style, must be one of the most elegant and sleekest warships ever seen, except perhaps the SOL BIANCA, and all without revealing any of its abilities, except as a command vessel. And then there's Buster Machine 3, the largest object mankind has ever constructed anywhere. Blimey!

# AIM FOR THE TOP



# GUNBUSTER™

GUNBUSTER

7



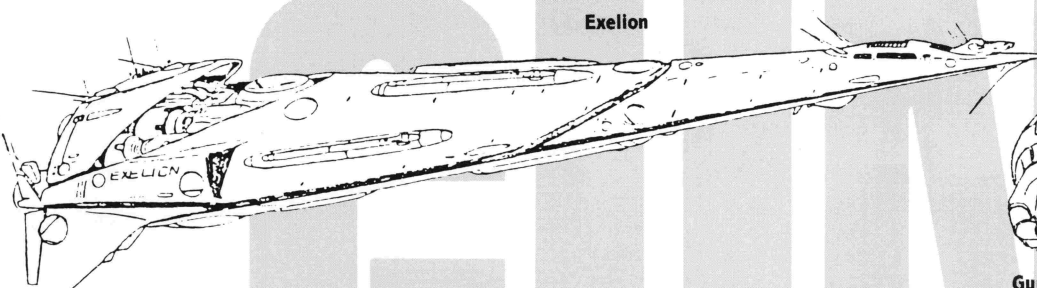


## MEET THE GANG

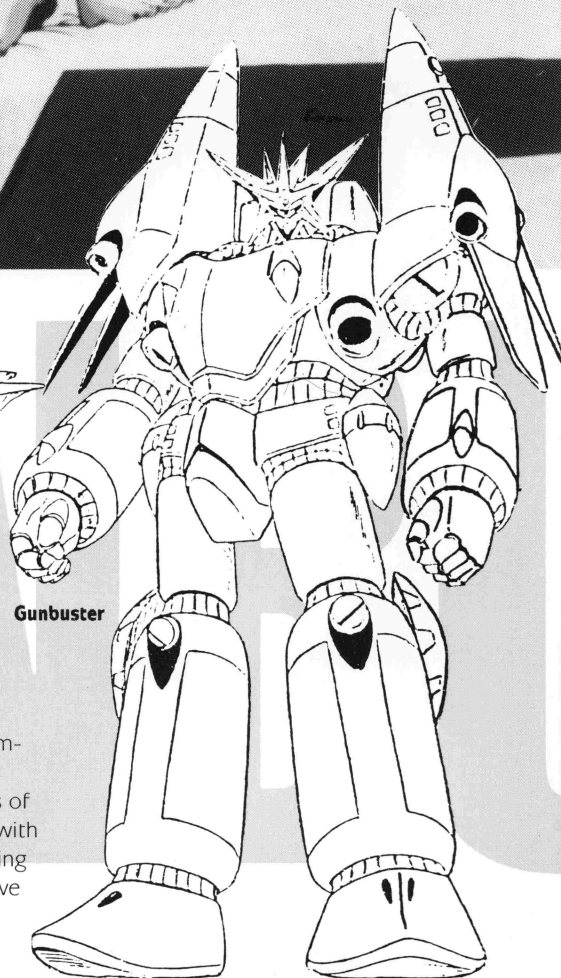
Meanwhile, down on the level of individual humans (the real focus of the story) we have a fascinating cast list, many of whom are loosely, or perhaps not so loosely, based on real people.

There are at least four different Norikos involved in GUNBUSTER, including the voice artist, theme singer, a real-life Takaya Noriko on the Gainax staff and of course the spunky heroine. The entire story revolves around her, the forging of her spirit so that she can strike the final, decisive blow, and the efforts of the rest of the cast to deliver her successfully to that ultimate encounter. Heavy. Initially, Noriko is motivated by the standard Type 1 schoolgirl crush, of which anime is inordinately fond, for her school senior and apparently effortless heroine, Amano Kasumi. Noriko calls her onesama, 'big sister', also 'mistress', only calling her by name once, when the younger girl takes charge. Watch for it. At first Noriko seems incapable of mastering even the simplest functions of the RX-7 combat training basic mobile suit. (Every school should have them.) Yet she is spotted as having the vast natural potential required for the secret GUNBUSTER project. Sound familiar? And when she is selected for space duty, everyone else immediately assumes it's favouritism, as her father commanded the first earth ship to encounter, and be destroyed by, the aliens. Noriko steels herself to the task when it is demonstrated to her that even talent requires practice. All that in the first half of episode one.

Noriko is also possibly the biggest anime fan to actually appear in anime, having, amongst many others, an original YAMATO poster on her apartment wall. How valuable is that piece of memorabilia in 2033? She also rattles off the titles of half a dozen other shows as her favourites - which Gainax is no doubt going to get around to producing sometime in the next forty-odd years.



Exellion



Gunbuster

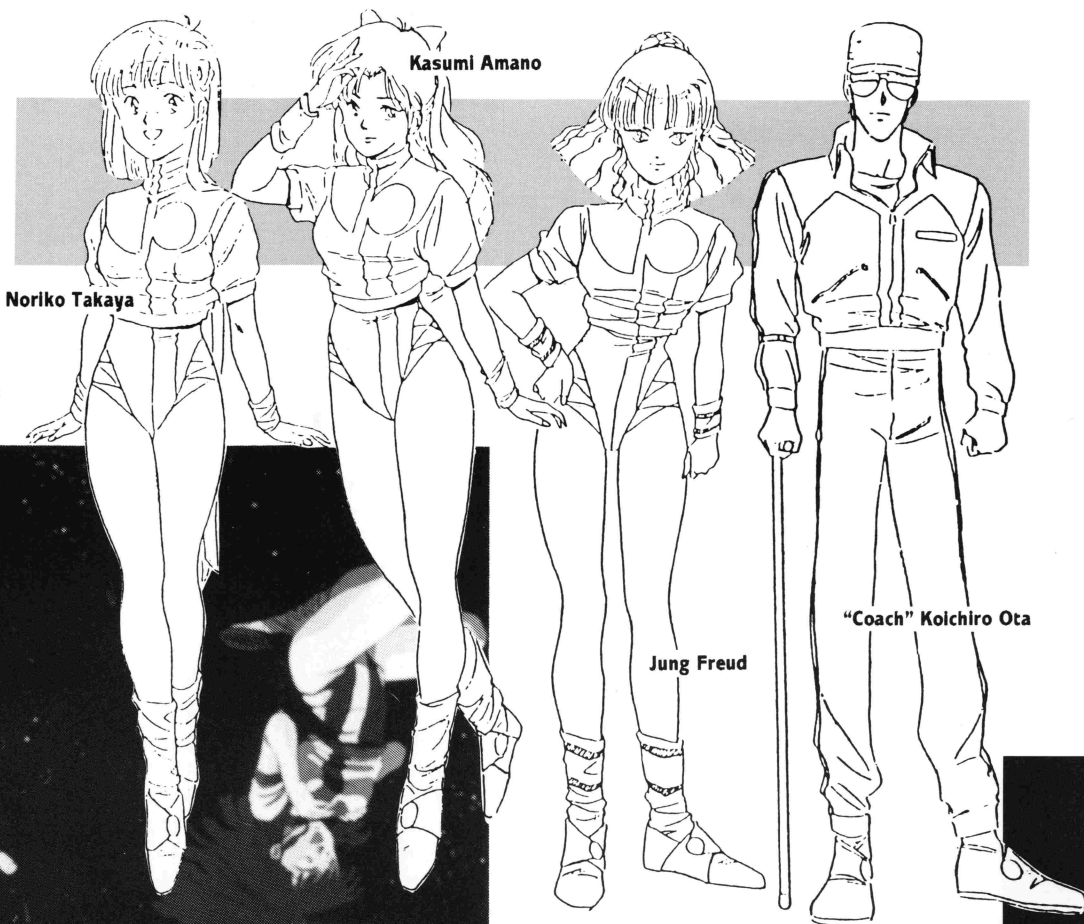
### STAFF :

Director/Screenplay	ANNO Hideaki
Producers	TAKEMISHI Minoru SASAKI Shiro INOUE Hiroaki
Original Screenplay	OKADA Toshio
Art Directors	HIGUCHI Masumi ANNO Hideaki
Character Design	MIKIMOTO Haruhiko
Mecha Design	OTA Koichi

Amano Kasumi, the best student in the Okinawa Space Highschool (for Girls we never get to see the Boys), begins as example and idol to Noriko, but later becomes dependent on her as the increasing stress of combat, and the developing relationship with the dying Coach, wears her down, mirroring Noriko's growing self-confidence. True love is common, but never easy, in anime.

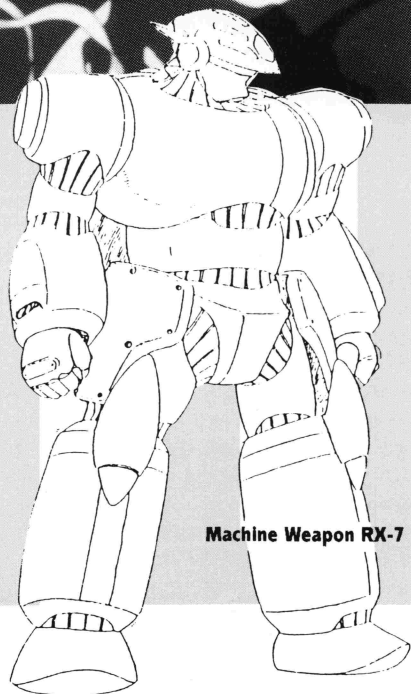


Meanwhile Jung Freud, 'Fearless Girl Genius' of the heroic Soviet Space Defence Force, joins the team, first as rival to Kasumi. She keeps herself separate from the pair, right through to the final act, when she is willing to die just to stay with them. With a name like hers you'd expect all manner of psychological problems, not least of which is the 'boob envy' she discusses with the others in the entirely necessary bath scene. She prefers the reduced Lunar gravity as it places less strain on her straps. Well, *ahem*.



Among the slew of supporting characters, worthy of note is Captain, later Admiral, Tashiro, commander of the battleship Exelion, and later the superplus space battleship Eltreum. A deeply religious man, it is his task to keep some semblance of order in the whole GUNBUSTER affair. He also has the distinction of eating watermelon on the most stupendous starship bridge anywhere ever. Kimiko, Noriko's best friend and closing title-companion, always there with a horoscope for her friend's fortune, is the girl Noriko never manages to be. She gets to become wife, mother, and grow old with her child, left behind by relativity. Noriko's bitter enemy in the first episode, Kashiwara, awakens Noriko's talents, later replaces Coach as chief instructor at the school, and finally reappears some twenty-odd years later as school principal - a life redeemed by her single, pivotal encounter with Noriko. Super Lightning Kick!

The person probably most responsible for the mayhem, as designer of the GUNBUSTER, both in the show and in the actuality of the GAINAX studios, is Ota Koichiro. 'Coachie' makes Noriko achieve her true destiny as the GUNBUSTER pilot. As one of the few survivors of the Luxion, Noriko's father's vessel, personally saved by the Captain, it's likely he designed the GUNBUSTER specifically for Noriko, as payment for his life. (The 'one-true-pilot' concept is of course an old staple of mecha design, falling out of favour after the GUNDAM and MACROSS pilot training programmes.) The Coach is also responsible for the Black-Hole Bomb, which eventually destroys all monsters; he proposes this just before he drops dead of space radiation sickness, only just giving Kasumi time to marry him. (Some people!)



Probably the most pivotal character in Noriko's life, although he only appears in one episode, is her first and only (male) true love teen romance, Smith Toren. When they go into battle for the first time, acting as a team after Kasumi rejected her, she is unable to get a single shot off, and doesn't even see him die. This is the techno-horror episode; how incomprehensible and unheroic battle can be to individuals. She learns from his loss just how truly alone she is. And, of course, the real Toren Smith is well known as a manga translator and writer of the American DIRTY PAIR comic, and founder member of the CUTEY BUNNY fan club. He was also, allegedly, in Japan at the time GUNBUSTER was being made. Coincidence? Or conspiracy? Or did they just meet in a bar, like he insists happened?





## FASTER THAN THE HUMAN EYE

GUNBUSTER continues the tradition of visual puns and sight gags that always seem to crop up in anime, but only for a frame or two - the Coke and Bud can missiles in PROJECT A-KO a prime example. The GUNBUSTER crew make sure you see their jokes. A space tug which bears more than a passing resemblance to the Proteus submarine from FANTASTIC VOYAGE; the Eltreum being scratchbuilt in orbit from the sprues of a model kit of a certain other spacecruiser; a squad of Sizzler mecha raising the flag Iwo-Jima style; RX-7s doing early morning callisthenics. One thing that, perhaps surprisingly, isn't a gag is the orbital cable-cars seen in the last episode. This is an actual forerunner to the Beanstalk orbital elevator concept, first put forward by a Russian scientist in the sixties, and popularised by Arthur C. Clarke. (Gets in everywhere he does.) Then there are the Tokyo Olympic '64 blazers, Fireflash's cousin, and dolphin navigators.

Then, of course, we ought to mention the supra-luminal-hyper-spatial-drive pseudoscience lessons that end each episode. They are so internally consistent, and just this side of convincing, you could almost believe they were the real thing. Almost. If you didn't know where 'Tannhauser Gates' come from, that is. It's always nice to see the principles explained outside of the show itself. Sensors indicate.

It sounds like hype, but GUNBUSTER has it all, usually because it stole it from somewhere else, and then made it its own. Cute girls in leotards with no backsides to them (and in the bath - absolutely vital to the plot!), teenage romance, mecha mayhem, gorgeous battlewagons, and the most completely over-the-top 'doomsday' device you will ever see. Oh yes, and more weapons crammed into one giant robot than you could shake a double-buster-collider at. And best of all, it's a cracking good yarn! You've got to love it.

GUNBUSTER - AIM FOR THE TOP! was originally released in 1988 as a threepart OAV series with two episodes in each part and their respective 'Science Classroom' lessons, and a preview of the following tape. The whole tone of the show was encapsulated by the pre-credits sequence, from being relentlessly upbeat to deadly serious by turns.

# PLOT SYNOPSIS

2015 - Captain Takaya promises his daughter Noriko he will return for her ninth birthday, before leaving for deep space as commander of the hyperlight spacecruiser *Luxion*. But the ship is lost in combat with unknown aliens, leaving Noriko alone.

## EPISODE 1 - UNBELIEVABLE! AMANO AND I ARE PILOTS!

2021 - Noriko is studying to become a space combat pilot at the Okinawa Space High School for Girls, but she cannot master the RX-7 trainer mecha, despite encouragement from her best friend Kimiko. Two pupils will be chosen for special duty with the GUNBUSTER project, and school idol, apparently effortless heroine Amano Kasumi, seems set to be one. The new coach, Ota Koichiro, takes a special interest in Noriko, prompting accusations of favouritism through her father's connections, when she is chosen alongside Kasumi. The Coach uses Kasumi's example to demonstrate to Noriko that even talent needs practice and dedication, but before she can take her destined place, Noriko must meet the challenge of the other favourite candidate, Kashiwara ...

2015 - As the *Luxion* breaks up, Captain Takaya stays aboard, saving the life of Ota, making him the last man off the ship.

## EPISODE 2 - CHALLENGE OF THE FEARLESS GIRL GENIUS

2021 - Aboard space station Silver Star Noriko and Kasumi meet Captain Tashiro, commander of the new space battleship Exelion, and Soviet moonbase-born ace pilot Jung Freud, third prospective candidate for the GUNBUSTER. Jung challenges Kasumi to a duel during a training exercise, leading to a severe reprimand, but apparently reconciling the two.

An unidentified object is reported approaching Earth at near lightspeed, and Kasumi, Noriko and Ota attempt an interception. Due to the relativistic effects of near lightspeed travel, it will be Noriko's sixteenth birthday, a date she shares with Jung, when they return. The object is a ship, the returned *Luxion*. Noriko boards against orders, and discovers only two days have passed since the battle. Captain Takaya has fulfilled his last promise to her. The delay causes the trio to return six months later, finding the Exelion ready to leave to meet the alien threat ...

## EPISODE 3 - FIRST LOVE, FIRST SORTIE

While on a dare during the shutdown for space warp, Noriko meets one of the male pilots, Smith Toren. Rejected as combat team-mate by Kasumi, Noriko partners with Smith in the first combat with the Aliens. The fleet approaches Leaf (Wolf) 64, discovering a dying red giant where once Captain Tashiro had found a bright yellow sun like Earth's. The Aliens are living spaceship-organisms, incubating their 'young' inside stars and destroying them in the process. The first engagement is over so fast that Smith is killed without Noriko realising, leaving her even more alone.

## EPISODE 4 - LAUNCH! THE INCOMPLETE FINAL WEAPON

Noriko receives special training from Ota for the GUNBUSTER, but is challenged to combat by Jung, now jealous of her. Noriko collapses, unable to do anything when they go into space.

It is theorised that the Alien creatures are akin to antibodies, protecting the Galaxy against the 'disease' of Man. The fleet warps back to the solar system, hoping to use Halley's Comet as cover so the Aliens will not discover the home of mankind. However, when they arrive Alien ships arrive with them, vastly outnumbering the fleet. Soon, only the Exelion and a few mecha are left. Noriko determines that the only hope is for her to take the GUNBUSTER out to face the foe ...

## EPISODE 5 - PLEASE, SAVE ENOUGH TIME FOR LOVE

2032 - On their return, ten years have passed on Earth, and Noriko meets Kimiko, now married with a daughter. Kimiko asks if Noriko can find a place for the little girl aboard the latest space battleship, the Eltreum, thought by many to be an evacuation ship, but she cannot. Noriko sees an argument between Coach and Kasumi, discovers he is dying of radiation sickness, and is sworn to secrecy by him.

A vast Alien fleet approaches, covering seven-tenths of the sky. Ota suggests using the Exelion as a bomb to create a Black Hole and destroy the Aliens. The ship flies on remote control to the heart of the enemy, guarded by the GUNBUSTER piloted by Noriko and Kasumi. However, just before the crucial moment, Kasumi breaks down, unable to continue. She loves Ota, and fears he will be dead by the time she returns ...

## EPISODE 6 - AT THE END OF THE ENDLESS STREAM

2048 - Kasumi leaves her post as coach at the Okinawa school, and the grave of her husband, to pilot Buster Machine 3, the most stupendous weapon ever built by man, designed to destroy the Aliens' heart at the centre of the Galaxy. Relatively, almost no time has passed with the Eltreum and accompanying fleet, and Noriko and Jung have hardly aged. Kasumi will accompany Noriko aboard the GUNBUSTER instead of Jung.

In the final battle to decide the fate of mankind, the Aliens ambush the fleet by a short-range warp, damaging the collapsing generator array of Buster Machine 3 enough to prevent detonation. The GUNBUSTER carries two collapsing generators at its heart, and the pair fly it to the heart of the Black Hole bomb. Jung tries to accompany them, but Noriko promises to return, using the power of the second generator. But the vast flash of light from the detonating weapon overtakes the GUNBUSTER, and on earth Kimiko hears her friend's last cry.

14292 - Twelve thousand years later ...  
The End.





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# RIDING BEAN





# URUSEI Y



A wise man once said, "When something defies description, let it!", and despite the following (which demonstrates my inability to follow his advice!) you may assume this is the case with Takahashi Rumiko's manga and anime creation URUSEI YATSURA.

URUSEI YATSURA is one of those titles beloved of Kanji fetishists and the bane of most linguists' lives. Due to the complicated way this form of Japanese text has been assembled over the years, it lends itself readily to wordplay. So, with this series, the title kanji could be read as "Shut up, obnoxious/noisy people", or "Those obnoxious/noisy people from the star Uru" or "Those obnoxious aliens", or ... I'll leave it there, as while there are many more daft definitions to be had, this is not a review of modern kanji!

URUSEI YATSURA is, at its oh so soft and huggy heart, a love story, and the premise behind it is quite simple.

Imagine, if you will, a quiet prefecture somewhere in the heart of Japan, like its many neighbours a self-contained little world with the local high school at the centre. Look a little closer, though, and you might notice one or two oddities that don't quite fit with accepted Japanese behaviour - like the fact that many of the telephone poles seem to have sprouted small seats on top; maybe your attention will also be drawn to the most unusual burn marks evident on many of the local landmarks. But if anything is likely to give away the fact that Tomobiki Prefecture is several degrees shy of the norm it's the tigerstriped UFO lurking sheepishly above the roof of an unusually resigned-looking house. This is the residence of URUSEI YATSURA's main protagonist and antagonist, the happily "married" Princess Lum of the Oni and the "clockwork orangutan" Moroboshi Ataru.

Our happy couple live with Ataru's luckless parents as the result of a most unusual "sports day". Some time ago the Oni (intergalactic

reivers, pirates and convenient plot devices) decided that it would be fun to annex this obscure little planet "Earth", and their leader assigned his daughter Lum play tag with a randomly selected Earthling over a period of ten days to decide the issue without bloodshed. What follows proves that there is in fact a God, and that He has an extremely twisted sense of fun.

The computer holding all the details of every one of our planet's life forms selected out of the whole population of this geological marvel one name on whose sturdy shoulders the fate of an entire world would rest, in whose faith, heart and spirit all nations could place their trust. An athlete of Olympian standing, perhaps, someone from the military dedicated to the protection of the Earth? Could we dare to hope that such an individual would stand forth to champion us in this fairly murky hour?

No...

From the entirety of humanity the computer selected an individual who only just qualified as human. As if Moroboshi Ataru didn't have enough problems already - his girlfriend, his many would-be girlfriends, his lecherous habits and his almost complete lack of intelligence - he now had to chase a bikini clad alien temptress in an attempt to grab hold of her. However, perhaps his special combination of qualities did in fact make him the perfect choice, since at the eleventh hour he snatched victory from the jaws of defeat by snatching Lum's bra, thus saving the Earth, repelling the invaders and somehow convincing this singular young lady that he would like to marry her. Since his prospective father-in-law stood about fifteen feet taller than him and seemed very keen on the whole idea, Ataru accepted. Not quite knowing what to do with his new "wife", he decided it would be best to ignore the horned harridan and let life get back to normal.

And, on the whole, things DO settle back to normal in the Moroboshi household and in

Urusei Yatsura... or  
Gross Encounters of the Lecherous Kind... or  
The National Grid is a Girl's Best Friend

by **Darren Ashmore**



# YATSURA

Tomobiki Prefecture, with the possible exception of more alien visitations, fire breathing babies, inept vampires, private armies, lovesick ghosts, bad cooking, large explosions, electric shocks, tea party World Wars, girls, girls, girls, deranged priests, Shinto paramedics, watermelon Gods, arranged marriages, ghostly goats, alternate (near)realities, eligible Crow Princesses, extremely cute assassins, and almost continual bad luck for that ignoble Don Juan, Ataru. (And poor old Mr. Moroboshi will probably end up having to pay for it all.)

## URUSEI YATSURA - ONLY YOU

by Helen McCarthy,  
translations by Jonathan Clements

Directed by the inimitable OSHII Mamoru, whose work on the tv series was such a major part of its success, this UY movie takes an interesting twist on the tv series' usual plot. Lum once again has trouble as Ataru leches after another girl ... but this is another beautiful alien princess, also madly in love with Ataru and claiming to be his fiancée after a game of Shadow Tag when they were children!

Despite resistance from Lum and her friends, Elle carries Ataru off to her home planet for the wedding and the rest of the Tomobiki gang are dragged along. Planet Elle is a Mills and Boon dream of romance and roses, magnificently depicted through design and animation which combines an almost naive simplicity and sugared-almond colour range to magical effect; but all is not as it seems on this romantic dreamworld. What's that freezer full of men for, and how will it affect Ataru's plan to turn the whole planet into his personal harem? Meanwhile Lum soars to the rescue, finding new strength in her determination to rescue her "Darling" - writer Kaneharu Noriko, writing in the ONLY YOU movie brochure, says that "Ataru's Lois Lane and Lum is Superman"! Describing the world of URUSEI YATSURA as "a world like a toy box ... packed with sf, gags, school capers,

love comedy, etc etc..." Kaneharu points out that despite the many temptations offered to Ataru in the tv series, by beauties like Benten, Oyuki and Kurama, and despite Ataru's confusion and indecision, the love between him and Lum has been strong enough to endure so far. But the introduction of a new element - a girl who is not only a total babe, but also has a prior claim on Ataru's love through a childhood betrothal - may change everything in the UY universe.

ONLY YOU is a wordplay as broad as the original URUSEI YATSURA. It implies many different levels of meaning - Lum feels Ataru is the only guy for her, so ONLY YOU; UY fans have Lum close in their hearts, so for them, it's ONLY YOU Lum. The film crew hope that each viewer will feel the film is made for them and them alone, so ONLY YOU the viewer; and they hope that UY fans will communicate with each other through experiencing the film, so the film is for ONLY YOU UY fans and the special bond you share.

*UY TRIVIA - just a few of the many thousands of fascinating facts on this most popular of manga and tv series*

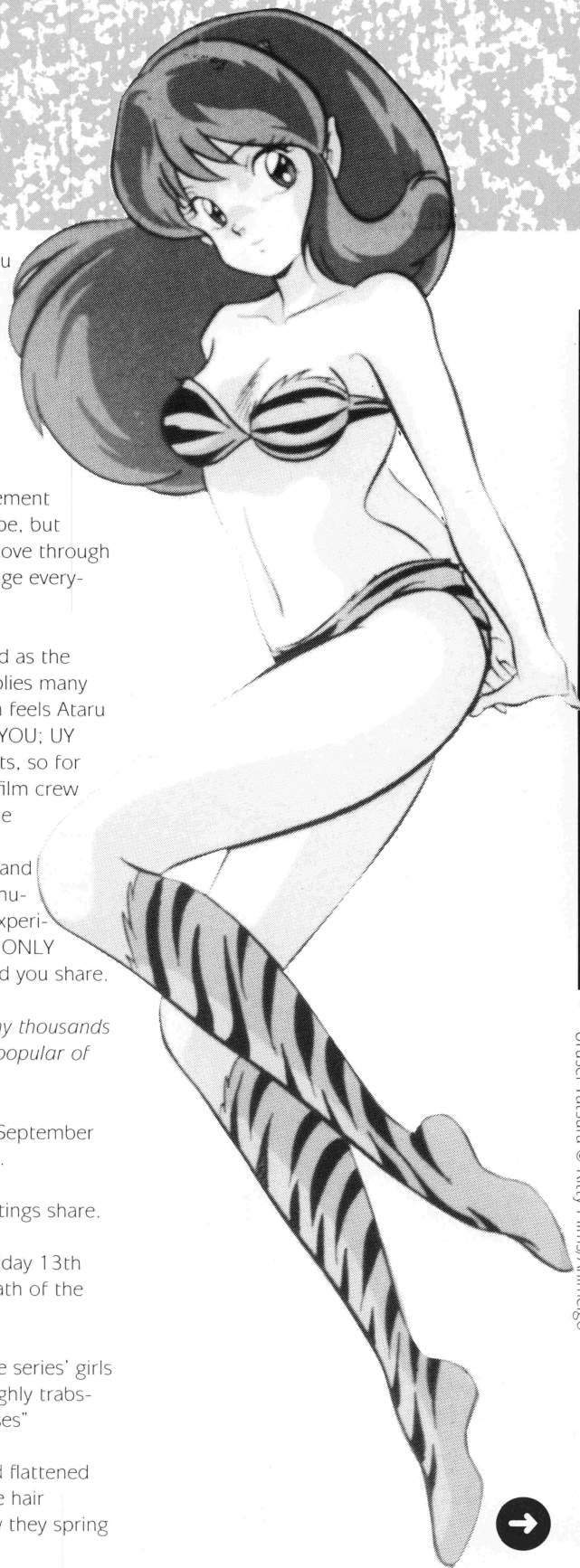
The manga first appeared in the September 1978 issue of SHONEN SUNDAY.

The FUJI TV series took a 20% ratings share.

Moroboshi Ataru was born on Friday 13th and on the anniversary of the death of the Buddha

Ten-chan's phrase to describe the series' girls is KIREINA-NE-CHAN, which roughly translates as "Gorgeous-or-what! misses"

Lum's horns can be softened and flattened to her skull so that they resemble hair ornaments; but when she's angry they spring out again!





**LUM,**  
**Princess of the Oni**

Flighty, spritely with a spark(l)ing personality, Lum is the centre of attention in Tomobiki. Her devotion to her (seemingly) uncaring "husband" has driven her many admirers mad with frustration, anger and grief but she truly DOES love her "Darling" more than anyone can guess. To the untrained eye this may not be immediately evident as she seems to spend most of her time with him either dragging him away from other young ladies or applying high voltage charges to his frontal lobes AFTER dragging him away from said confused femmes. Being a true cosmopolitan, Lum demonstrates a high degree of insight into the affairs of most of the intelligent life forms throughout the universe, but while such knowledge, in an enlightened and informed spacefaring culture, generally makes for an easier life, on a xenophobic, introspective, uptight little mud-ball like Earth it tends to manifest itself as blasé ignorance of most local matters and confusion about the rest. The chances are, however, that Lum's transition into Human society would have been far smoother had she not been saddled with such an oddball set of acquaintances - and, for that matter, family.



**MOROBOSHI ATARU**

Chemical chance in chunky knitwear, the only boy whose "little red book" comes in 15 cross-referenced volumes, and under the distinct impression that dating is a "Zen thing". While not actually the laziest scholar in the world, or even the most selfish person one could chance upon, nor the epitome of the seven deadly sins, Ataru is unique in coming a close second in all seven races. So used to the high levels of animosity he has built up throughout his romantic career, he is somewhat upset by Lum's constant affectionate attention (his true pleasure comes from the chase) and doesn't know how to deal with it. His confusion generally manifests itself as heavy bouts of "skirt scouting" which ALWAYS leads to a serious dose of electrical "Divine retribution" from his ever watchful wife; this engenders high levels of depression and rebellion in the deranged youth, usually directed into another episode of "girl patrol" with the obvious consequences; a sort of "Moebius relationship"



**SHINOBU**

Often disparagingly referred to as the "ghost boy", Shinobu is the closest Ataru has come to a steady girlfriend in years, a young lady of saintly patience, iron determination and Herculean strength - exactly the sort of qualifications required in a partner for Tomobiki's numero uno pervert. It's not clear whether her long-term interest in Ataru is founded on a deep love for the boy or the challenge of getting rid of Lum, but either way it's led to many interesting confrontations for the petite and conservative little avatar. Being the most sanity-oriented of the Tomobiki set the surfeit of bizarre happenings tends to affect her more than most, and she seems to have decided that the best way to cling to her sanity through all the oddball events that seem to have become the norm is to cling as hard as possible to ANY remnants of life before Lum - including Ataru.





## SAKURA

very few people can honestly say that close contact with Ataru has improved their lives to ANY extent; even though Sakura is one such her general opinion of Ataru is only marginally shy of a deathwish. She is Tomobiki's resident Shinto priestess plus (check the name) Cherry's favourite niece, and this latter connection made her suffer a dreadful fate in childhood. She was cursed with a whole generation's worth of infectious diseases and general ill health; however the small but intelligent spirits cursing her were distracted when she tried to rid Ataru of the curse of lechery, and decided that he offered a far better bet for spirits bent on making an individual REALLY unlucky. With her health restored Sakura took up the post of nurse at Tomobiki High School, and keeps an eye on Ataru and the local crazies while fighting off their unwanted attentions to her very attractive person.

## TEN

Ten is small, pudgy, cute. Lum's favourite cousin, and does a reasonable impression of an F-16's afterburner. Ten's arrival on Earth was precipitated by Lum's marriage to a barbaric human; he felt his presence on the scene would defer even the most debauched sub-being from overstepping the mark (so naive, ain't it cute?) However, Ataru proved more than a match for even a flame-throwing flying superbaby, and so, with all the aplomb of a member of a far superior race he passes his time "allowing" himself to be adored by any passing young lady (especially if it happens to be that nice Sakura) and occasionally toasting Ataru just to keep his hand in. As a general point of reference, Ten-chan proved so popular in his appearances in the original URUSEI YATSURA manga that he was moved up from the later stories to become one of the first-season cast when the series was animated for tv.

## CHERRY

A scale model of a superdeformed sumotori, this little monk had dwelt in Tomobiki prefecture for some time before the start of proceedings. Until Lum arrived his only claim to fame was his constant ability to divert the attention of the city planners from the small plot of waste land on which he had erected his tent, using dire threats of divine retribution and the fact that he might call round for dinner one evening... His ability to sniff out bad luck as easily as a nice bowl of sukiyaki led him to Ataru's side but his efforts to protect the boy from the hideous karma awaiting him never have the slightest effect, probably because he is a complete waste of space in matters spiritual - Cherry can't even exercise, let alone exorcise.

## OYUKI

Her vacuous highness Oyuki, Princess Royal of All Neptune, is sometimes regarded as the single most manipulative, coldhearted and Machiavellian of all the URUSEI YATSURA regulars; indeed it is generally accepted that if she were in possession of anything other than icicles between the ears she would be reasonably dangerous (rather than just "dangerous to know"). That she is one of Lum's oldest school friends should give you some idea of how she came to acquire such a total lack of smarts, and the fact that she has on occasion referred to Ataru as an "attractive" prospect gives an inkling of how utterly irredeemable her situation is. However, without some inside knowledge of this cute little Snow Queen's past you would be forgiven for having the highest regard for Princess Oyuki, as her Royal upbringing has given her a personality of the rarest wonder and a compassionate nature of crystalline delicacy (at least on the surface.) Her impeccable manners, faultless sense of dignity and stunning good looks have lured many an unwary youth to the icebound hell that is Neptune's Snow Clearance Project. In short, if male, it is safe to trust Oyuki about as far as you could comfortably throw an iceberg.

## RAN

Ran-chan does not live up to the redhead rep; indeed, she is so emotionally unstable that the only way to define her unique personality is to look up "Plague of Locusts", "Wrath of God" and "Cinderella" and combine them in whatever manner seems most suitable. Yet another of Lum's schoolfriends, she and Lum were very close until Lum's betrothal to Rei in the teeth of Ran's adoration for him. Hell may have no fury like a woman scorned but give her a spacecraft, a large collection of ordnance and a vicious streak a mile wide and we're all set for a few bouts of "Assassination City" in Tomobiki prefecture. Ran's target is Ataru (on the principle that since Lum has taken her beloved she will do likewise) but this presents a problem of its own, in that Ran, being not unattractive, has become yet another point of interest for our daring deviant and ... well, work the rest out for yourselves!

## BENTEN

Why are the Gods not required to take driving tests? This is a reasonable question once you've seen this demented divinity hurling her jetbike around. No, it's not an example of technocracy replacing theocracy in the Heavens but simply the Gods adapting to the new order. After the final acceptance of the existence of alien worlds the less monotheistic pantheons moved into the new Multiverse and the truth that 'we all make God in our own image' led to deities adopting such ephemera as fusion reactors, microwave ovens, large caliber weaponry and total war with anyone who got in the way. Benten and Lum met during a clash of wills between their respective families and have been friends ever since. Those chains are very hard indeed and no, they are NOT just for keeping her bra in place.

## MENDO SHUTARO

Tomobiki's poor little rich kid, Mendo expected his family's wealth, position and power to stand him in good stead no matter what the future might hold - mistake number one. Mistake number two was to assume that his heritage would guarantee him anything he wanted, including Lum. It was not her rejection of his advances that upset him - after all, his father only owns most of Japan while her parents own most of a solar system - but the fact that he had been passed over for that genetic practical joke Moroboshi Ataru. His solution was a tribute to the ancient samurai legacy to which he is heir, and about as simple - he tried to kill Ataru. Several days later he tried again, and again, and as far as I am aware he has been doing so every few days ever since ...





**CELS** - Can't get the cels you want? TAIRA Yoshihiro is a Japanese fan who might be able to help you. If you write to him with a list of the shows/characters you are interested in, a self addressed envelope and two International Reply Coupons, he'll get back to you within three weeks with details of cels and prices - write to him at 2-6-9 Kitashinjuku, Shinjuku-ku #169, Tokyo, Japan and ask for full details.

**CD ORDERS** - Rudi Reichardt tells us that ONDES, 31 Rue Greuze, 75116 Paris, France, has "literally hundreds of (anime) music CDs and laserdiscs!" Send an sae and two IRC's for their latest price list.

anime in Germany; they emphasise that they're interested in every aspect of anime and are starting a German-language zine, ANIMANIA, to help German fans get involved and stay informed. They welcome

# RETAIL ROUNDUP

new readers, writers and artists, and also offer a mail order service for videos and goods. Write

**ANIME CONNECTION OF GERMANY** is run by two fans who are keen to promote

to them at Postfach 69, 56239 Selters, Germany, or fax (010 49) 2626-1281.

RUDI REICHARDT, Ceresstraat 14, 4011 CC Breda, The Netherlands; 14 year old boy who wants to write to anyone who likes anime and manga, also Chinese/Japanese girls aged 12-16 years. "I like learning Cantonese, listening to music, playing basketball and, of course, collecting anime and manga. My favourites are RANMA 1/2, MAISON IKKOKU, PROJECT A-KO, URUSEI YATSURA, ARISLAN and OTAKU NO VIDEO."

JUDITH LOPEZ OLMEDA, C/Jaume I, 27, 08211 Castellar del Valles, Barcelona, Spain, "I'm a Spanish girl of 19 years and I want to have correspondence with other anime and manga fans. (Come on! Please! Kudasai! Bitte! S'il vous plait! Per favor! Si us plau!) We can exchange different material, etc ... write soon!"

PHIL VELASQUEZ, 413 Wolfe Street, Vallejo, CA 94590, USA. Seeking international penpals. Interest : anime, manga, fantasy, mythological beings such as mermaids and satyrs, horror, and anthropomorphic art. Will reply to all letters.

LAURA WATTON, 21 Brookwillow Road, Hayley Green, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 1BS; "I'm 14, and I love odd Japanese things - no, really. My fave anime is RANMA 1/2 and I've been getting to know LUM and CATGIRL : NUKU-NUKU. Manga titles I collect include RANMA 1/2, CARAVAN KIDD, MAISON IKKOKU and OUTLANDERS. Hobbies include drawing, painting, SNES and revising for tests upon tests upon tests for GCSEs (not that I really ENJOY that!) Anybody, anywhere, write to me and I will write back, I promise!"

MARTIN WITTIG, Adelheider Str. 50, 27755 Delmenhorst, Germany (email : E15L@zfn.uni-bremen.de); age 23, favourite shows PROJECT A-KO, 3 x 3 EYES and ORANGE ROAD "but I also like fantasy anime and soundtracks. I also have a lot of anime-pictures for computers (GIFs). I'm looking for new anime contacts all over Europe for writing and swapping!"

MONICA DI STEFANO, Via Voltri 5/6/S, 16158 Genova GE, Italy, aged 21 and

## PEN PALS

CINZA MANTERO, Via Voltri 5/10/D, 16158 Genova GE, Italy aged 23, are two Italian girls who want to correspond with girls or boys who love manga and anime. All letters welcome.

JOEY FELICIANO, 100K Laurel Street, HFTO, CT 06106, USA, writes "I want penpals who are fans of anime and would also like to hear from clubs or fanzines who accept US members." Favourite anime includes GUNDAM, DRAGON BALL Z, ROBOTECH, THE GUYVER and many others, collects toys, garage kits and CDs.

KEN TSANG, 128 Ferry Road, Edinburgh, EH6 4PG, Scotland, aged 15; "ANIME CRAZY! Likes RANMA 1/2, CITY HUNTER, URUSEI YATSURA, DRAGON BALL Z, and many others. Collects anime in Japanese, Cantonese, English and also subtitled. Anyone interested in swaps, please write to me!"

JOE R. JACKSON, 125 Southend Arterial Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 2SE, UK; 10 year old anime/manga fan, loves Sonoda's designs, BGC, Lum and CATGIRL : NUKU NUKU; fave SNES games STREET FIGHTER II TURBO, MORTAL KOMBAT and SECRET OF MANA, and loves RPGs! Looking for penpals aged around 10, male or female, all letters welcome!

JAMES TAYLOR, 95 Waverley Road, Harrow, HA2 9RQ, England; 27, amateur artist, loves XENON, AREA 88, ALITA, LONE WOLF & CUB, VENUS WARS, BAOH, anything by Takahashi Rumiko, also science fiction, art, history. "Please write to me!"

NICHOLAS ELLIOTT, 18 Denewood Avenue, Bramcote, Nottingham, NG9 3EU, England; 20 year old anime fan looking for "penpals throughout the world - boys or girls who like any type of anime, an answer to all letters is guaranteed."



### JAPANESE PEN FRIEND CLUBS

All these clubs are for general correspondence and therefore they may not be able to put you in touch specifically with anime and manga fans right away; but if you are willing to wait for the right penpal, or if you just want friends in Japan and don't mind whether or not they are into anime and manga, write to any of these groups saying you would like a Japanese penpal, giving as many details as possible of yourself and your preferred new correspondent, and enclosing a self-addressed envelope and two International Reply Coupons for a reply.

THE ASSOCIATION OF PEN-FRIENDS CLUBS OF JAPAN, Hongo P.O. Box N100, Tokyo, Japan.

INTERNATIONAL PEN-FRIENDS SOCIETY, Pen-Friend Central, P.O. Box 1004, Tokyo 100, Japan.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH EXCHANGE SERVICE, c/o Sanno Grand Building, Room 411, 214-2 Nagata-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

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## AH MY GODDESS OST

AH MY GODDESS OST 1, Pony Canyon, PCCG-00237, Y2,800, about £30 in the Sheffield Space Centre

I would like to give as unbiased a review of this CD as possible but it just isn't on. The first time I saw the character designs for the show I was hooked, so biased it'll just have to be! I bought this soundtrack at AD FILE 4 from Sheffield Space Centre and haven't had anything else on my Walkman since.

Those of you who know the series will have some idea of what they're in for should they be lucky enough to find a copy of this CD. All the tracks are delightful to listen to and bring a smile to the face. This album includes all the background music, plus the opening and closing themes and extended versions of both, for the first two episodes. Very useful is the fact that all the titles are in English, so no guessing what the obscure kanji means.

Of great importance - and ignored by many reviewers - is how well the music complements the video. (I once read a review which criticised the VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU OST for being too melancholy, yet the music suits the series perfectly.) A lively soundtrack, full of fun, this matches the video stories well, particularly in the second episode when Belldandy's sister Urd starts meddling. A couple of tracks are reminiscent of Vangelis (track 2, GODDESS DESCENT, and track 11, DESTRUCTION), and several are quite sad, but all are well orchestrated and easy on the ear. Particularly humorous are the two eyecatch pieces\*, even though each is only about five seconds long.

Overall, this soundtrack is guaranteed to bring a smile to the faces of all but the most jaded. (There, I even managed not to be too biased ... didn't I?)

\* eyecatch pieces are the tiny snatches of music written to accompany the eyecatch sequences - specially drawn animations or illustrations which signal the start and finish of an ad-break.

## THE GUNBUSTER 'DRAMADISK'

AIM FOR THE TOP! GUNBUSTER Victor Manga Golden Special, VDR-1601, 77.33 mins long, Y3008 inc tax; bought in the UK at Sheffield Space Centre for about £30

For those of you who've never come across one before, a dramadisk is something peculiar to Japan, in which the original voice actors from a movie, OAV or TV series come together to create spoken drama, usually in the style of the original. So what is an English fan doing with one, you may ask?

Well, this dramadisk differs from the norm in a couple of respects. First, it has 99 tracks and lasts over 77 minutes, almost all the available time on one CD. Secondly, it contains all the tracks that make up the first original sound track album. (There are two original sound track albums.) For those of you who haven't yet seen GUNBUSTER, the music is a mix of orchestral and light rock, and is most powerful. Often, themes from other sources can be heard, notably Vangelis' CHARIOTS OF FIRE and MARS from Gustav Holst's THE PLANETS SUITE. Three of the songs on this album are the opening and closing title pieces and the song which runs through the series, and all are a cut above the usual anime "cute music". The fourth is not quite so good - it sounds like a school song praising the wonders of the GUNBUSTER!

The remainder of the disk comprises two fairly short drama sections, the tracks which make it unique. The original voice actors are used to shout or speak key words or phrases from the series. These are obviously in Japanese, but if you speak the language or have a good knowledge of the anime they are very amusing, though they are really aimed at the Gunbuster otaku. The first drama section deals with fighting monsters (of the Godzilla type) while the second deals with the formation of a rock band employing the RX robots from the series.

All in all, this is a most unusual disk and is well worth adding to any anime collection, especially if you don't already own the first OST in the series.

GUNBUSTER TRIVIA FROM DAVE ROSS : did you know that most of the RX7 machines had nicknames? Takaya Noriko's is called NAUSICAA (surprise, surprise!), Amano Katsumi's is GISELLE, Jung Freud's is MISHA and Smith Toren's unit is EAGLE SAM!



# CD Reviews

by Dave Ross

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**K.O.**  
*Beast*

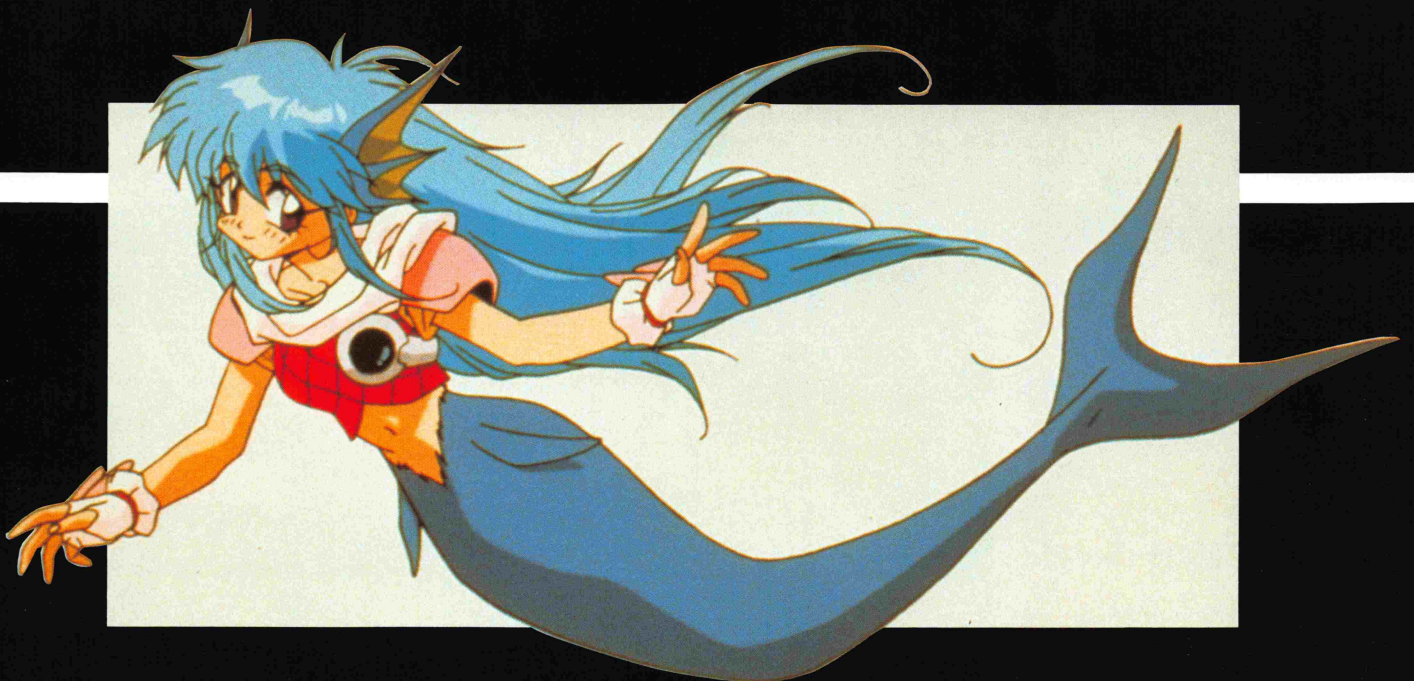




# Q. CENTURY Beast Warriors

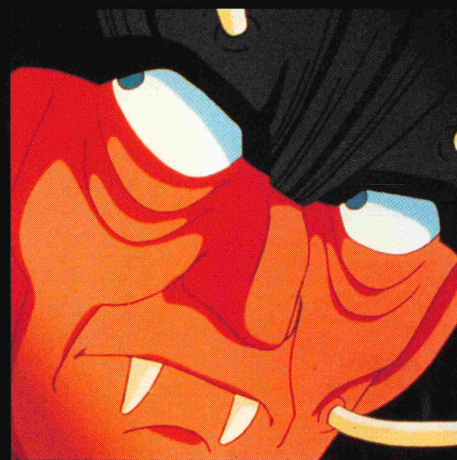
The world is getting smaller. These days the time lapse between the Japanese and English releases of popular anime is getting shorter and shorter. So this is rather a special anime feature, since by the time it sees print the first OAV of KO CENTURY BEAST WARRIORS should already be available in the UK.

by JONATHAN CLEMENTS

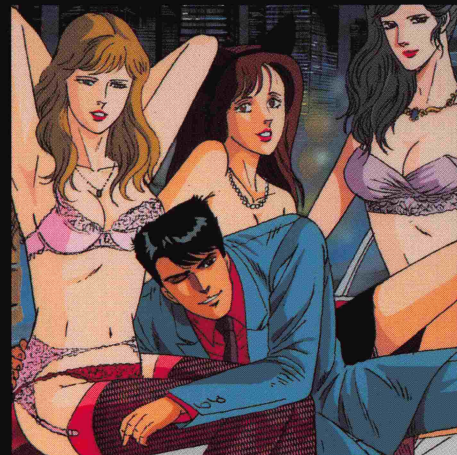




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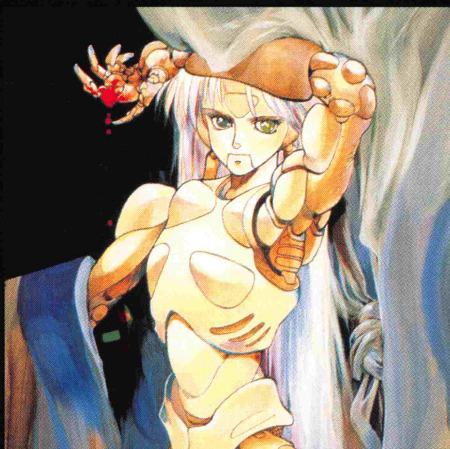


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# K.O. CENTURY Beast Warriors

The series was thrown into the multimedia at the deep end, with a manga adaptation in MONTHLY COMIC NORA by Rei Nakahara and plans announced for a PC game version. NEWTYPE called it "the first of a refreshing new wave" of OAVs, praising it for its ability to switch from serious mode to satire, and from pitched battles to love comedy. There is plenty in the series that an anime fan would recognise, like giant mecha for example, but there are also several new developments. Perhaps the most noticeable of these are the open spaces for ad-libs in the scripts, the ambient background music, and the portrayals of characters who are not afraid of laughing at themselves. One is reminded time and again of the improvisations that made their way into the final cut of STAR WARS, such as Harrison Ford's "Boring conversation anyway", the only difference being that such unscripted extras have been known to make hardworking translators weep. Another STAR WARS parallel is the make-up of the cast. Wan is an obvious Skywalker clone, while the hot-shot flyer Badd Mint is endowed with the rakish charm of a Japanese Han Solo. But Meima has more to her than Princess Leia. She is a princess, but in this post-feminist age controls the most powerful of the Totems, the giant Kairei. And Leia's mother never got as involved in the action as Arama will do in BEAST WARRIORS II.

Other gobbets of intertextuality include Mekka's similarity, in appearance if not in personality, to the Ninja Turtles, and the inclusion in illustrations for BEAST WARRIORS II of a MARINE BOY/GATCHAMAN style boomerang for Badd.

The Totems of BEAST WARRIORS owe much to their mecha predecessors, especially in the ability of Kairei, Kurei and Chirei to 'transform' into the superpowerful Shinrei. One is reminded above all of the Dai-X of STAR FLEET (Japan: X-BOMBER), which was similarly controlled by a trio of pilots. But the Totems are clearly different. What 70s super-robot ever bled when it was damaged? The suggestion is one of biomechanical engineering, rather than the straightforward robots of previous anime. The script describes such anomalies in fantastic, rather than scientific, terms; too far advanced for the heroes to comprehend, they are dismissed as "magic".

The baddies are unspeakably evil. In a departure from traditional sf plotting, the Humans are the evil invaders, although the definition of 'human' seems to have changed in the ten thousand years that separate us from the time of the story. Tourmaster is little more than a machine, while V-daan and V-zhon champion the cause of a race that has altered their genes and turned them into living weapons. When it comes to expressing themselves, the Human characters are pretty open about their feelings. Akumako's catchphrase is an enthusiastic "KILL EVERYBODY!" while V-daan is never far away from telling them how much he loves being so nasty. And in this anime, when a villain delivers a grandiose speech about the power of evil, the heroes are more than likely to tell him to \*\*\*\* off. It's this lovable flaunting of conventions that makes BEAST WARRIORS such an enjoyable video.

## LOVE YOUR TIGER FEET!

*Jonathan Clements on the agony and the agony of spending two weeks locked in a room with BEAST WARRIORS*

There are all sorts of problems in turning out an English version of this series. The title itself is a headache. Literally, KO SEIKO BIISUTO SANJUSHI comes out as KO CENTURY BEAST THREE BEASTKETEERS. Here you can already see English struggling to cope with a language that has four words for 'beast', all of which turn up in the script. If that wasn't bad enough, Japanese has seventeen different words for 'I' and (last count) thirteen for 'you', depending on how much of a bad mood someone is in. The potential annotations could go on forever. "You (lower-than-low) have forgotten the name of I (ultimate plain form with penultimate subject-exalting suffix)," is one of my own particular favourites from V-daan, especially when such a statement is grammatically incorrect in Japanese anyway and would only be uttered by a madman. Translating all that simply as "You've forgotten my name" would be sacrilege.

Then again, how is a translator supposed to deal with regional variations? Dr. Password has a slight Kansai accent, whereas most of the other characters speak the Kanto dialect. Meanwhile, Badd's Japanese is peppered with phrases of English to show just how cool he is. Fair enough, that might seem quite easy, but just how cool would it be if "Hey brother!" were just left like that in the translation? And what can a guy do when a character who's been happily speaking Modern Japanese suddenly starts speaking in Classical, quoting mediaeval diabolists and, on top of all that, sprinkling everything liberally with onomatopoeia? Thanks V-daan.

And as for the theme song ... here, you try the first line:

"Wandabadabadadattadatta,  
Wandabadabadadattadatta."

The theme is supposed to be silly, it's supposed to be a gargantuan tongue-twister, and it's even supposed to be ever so slightly off-key. Faithfully transforming it into an equally-cheesy English song is probably the biggest headache of all. One day, no doubt, scholars will pen vast tomes on the editorial consideration that went into the adaptation of immortal lyrics like "At the sight of you I go completely stiff", but let's just hope that day is far into the future. We could have re-recorded the whole thing, as Crusader have done with CATGIRL : NUKU-NUKU, but keeping the original Japanese lyrics with subtitles allows the audience to realise just how silly the song really is. There are terrible rumours at the moment that someone is actually planning to record the English-language version. If so, I feel for the singers, I really do.



**EPISODE ONE : LET'S GO!**

The village of the once-proud Beast Tribe is under attack from Human forces. The tribal chief, Shaba, stands in the ruins yelling at his people to stand and fight, but they are fleeing for their lives. Mortally wounded, Shaba begs his son, Wan, to protect the village Totem, but dies before he can reveal why it is so important. Mad with rage, Wan mounts a lone charge against the Human army, and is captured.

Brought aboard the battleship Ouranos as a hostage, Wan is thrown into a holding pen with Prince Badd of the Bird-tribe. Badd's village has also been attacked by Humans, and the Totem carried off. While the boys are arguing over what to do, two more prisoners are brought in: Meima, the daughter of the Mermaid Queen, and her Turtle-tribe friend Mekka.

The Human Dr. Password, Head of Scientific Research, sends his granddaughter Uni to them. Password is nervous about the Humans' plans, and fears for Yuni's future. He offers the Beast-warriors a deal: if they will help him and Yuni escape, he will unlock their holding pen. With no choice except remaining in captivity, the Beasts agree.

As Yuni leads them towards the exit hatch, the voice of Password explains the Humans' motives. Their own world now uninhabitable, they wish to live in the Beast lands. But faced with a hostile environment, the Humans need the mythical artefact known only as Gaia. The Totems of the tribes are really powerful weapons of ancient Human construction, and those of the Beast, Bird and Mermaid tribes are believed to hold the key to finding Gaia itself.

The Beasts reach the top deck of Ouranos, only to find that Password's plot has been discovered and that he is being held hostage by the Human warriors V-daan and V-zhon. Password is shot protecting Yuni from V-daan, and with his dying breath beseeches the Beasts to look after her. Fighting a losing battle against the Human forces, the Beasts are saved by the arrival of their Totems, which Password had previously activated. They make their escape on Kurei, and fly away with the Humans in hot pursuit.

**EPISODE 2 : FIRST CONTACT**

The Beasts receive a hero's welcome at the mountain-top village of the Bird tribe. At the celebrations, Wan, Mekka and Meima ask the Bird Chief if he has ever seen the symbol of Gaia. He remembers that he has seen it by a lake a couple of days' journey away. Intent on getting Gaia for themselves so that they can defeat the Humans, the Beasts resolve to find it, but the Chief forbids Badd to accompany them; as a future Bird Chief, it is simply too dangerous a mission for him. Accusing Badd of betraying Password, the others leave him behind.

They reach the lake, only to discover that it is

in the domain of the vicious Dog-tribe. They sneak into the village and find not one, but dozens of Gaia symbols carved into the rocks. Deciding to check each one the next day, they retire to their camp. That night, Yuni sleepwalks to the side of the lake with the crystal ball given to her by her grandfather. The others watch in amazement as a beam of light streams out of the crystal, bouncing off the Gaia symbols in sequence to create a giant symbol in the lake itself.

The next day, Meima dives into the lake, while the others wait. But the Humans have followed them, and decide to kill them now that they have led them to Gaia. V-daan revives the Dogs' Totem, which transforms into a huge metal beast and turns on its own tribe. With the Dogs fleeing in fear, it is left to the gang to defeat it. Badd arrives, against his Chief's orders, to help his friends, but the battle does not go in their favour. Wan is thrown into the lake, a potentially fatal event but for the timely arrival of Meima. With their efforts now combined, they destroy the Dog Totem and the Humans teleport back to their battleship. The energies released during the battle destroy a natural dam at its edge, and the lake drains to reveal a ruined city. At its centre stands a gleaming white tower, and the Beasts make towards it in search of Gaia...

**EPISODE 3: FINAL FIGHT**

The tower proves to be riddled with traps, and the gang are soon separated. Wan, Badd and Meima are locked in a room with traps

that seem keyed to their weaknesses, while Mekka and Yuni fall deep into the bowels of the complex.

Wan, Badd and Meima conquer the traps and go in search of the others, but mistakenly head upwards rather than downwards. Meanwhile, Yuni has been locked into the control module of the complex, while Mekka watches helpless. As Wan's group reaches the roof, they run into V-daan, who has brought the Humans' most powerful weapon, Marei.

In the ensuing battle, all three of their Totems are smashed, and V-daan prepares to kill the Beasts. But Yuni, gaining control of the complex, revives the Totems, which combine to form a giant mecha, Shinrei. Although initially hampered by the absence of an instruction manual, Wan, Badd and Meima manage to work out how to operate their new weapon, and destroy Marei. V-daan flees, and the quest seems over.

Or is it? The Voice of the complex speaks to them, revealing that it is not the true Gaia. It was once part of the "Gaia's circuit", but was cut off many years ago, and finds that its power has been seriously depleted in the fight with Marei. The complex shuts down before the Beasts can ask it any more questions, but Wan remains undeterred. He convinces the others to continue the search, swearing not to rest until he has driven the Humans from his world. Meanwhile, the Humans plot their next move ...







## CHARACTERS

### WAN DABADA

The 14-year-old son of the chief of the Beast tribe, Wan can turn into a tiger at will. This can present something of a problem, since deep inside he's really a pussy cat. Afraid of dogs, water and Meima, his obsession with food often leaves him prepared to take a chunk out of one of his friends. Wan's Totem beast is Chirei, a cybernetic big cat.

### BADD MINT

The grandson of the leader of the Bird tribe, Badd's 15 years make him the oldest of the group. Often referred to as "Budd" by American fans, and with good reason since the character is supposed to be American. Obsessed with girls, he's liable to tell any woman he meets that he would die for them, if he thinks that he has any chance of getting a snog. Unfortunately for Badd, his Beast-form is that of a Chicken, which reflects quite adequately his general attitude to anything that might involve getting hurt. His Totembeast is a jet-powered firebird called Kurei.

### MEIMA

A 14 year old Mermaid princess, Meima is destined to settle down with Wan and raise lots of little mer-kittens, though neither of them realise it yet. For the moment, they'll continue to torment each other with practical jokes, although sometimes their true feelings escape. Meima is obsessed with beautiful objects, and chases after all the gems and pretty clothes that she can get her hands on. Her beast-form is, well, a Mermaid, and her Totembeast is the giant robot Kairei.

### YUNI CHARM PASSWORD

Dr. Password's young grand-daughter, Yuni becomes the ward of the Beasts when the Doctor is killed. The living key to Gaia, Yuni is unaware that her genetic make-up has been altered to this effect by her grandfather. Polite, even to creatures intent on ripping her head off, Yuni's only problem is that she cannot sing to save her life.

### MEKKA MANNEN

A youth from the Turtle-tribe and a long-time friend of Wan and Meima, Mekka is slow but loyal. The self-appointed guardian of Yuni, he refuses to leave her side in times of trouble. Mekka has no Totem-beast and seems to do little to help, although the Japanese magazines have hinted that he will have a more important role in later episodes.

### TOURMASTER

The leader of the Human hordes, this cybernetic behemoth is permanently plugged into the Uranos computer, and possesses several auxiliary brains to help him plot the removal of the Beasts. The entity known as Tourmaster has been waiting for centuries for a chance to get hold of Gaia, and does not take kindly to the Beasts' interference.



### V-DAAN

The most powerful 'sorcerer' on a battleship where high technology is indistinguishable from magic, V-daan has an inflated sense of his own importance. The only thing that annoys him more than the Beasts' resistance is the fact that they can never get his name right. Hobbies include murder, attempted murder and, we can assume, cutting his own hair.

### V-ZHON

V-Daan's wife and partner in crime, V-zhon is proficient in the so-called 'magic' of the Humans, but prefers to use her unmatched skills in the martial arts. Cold and calculating, she is the only Human who is unimpressed by Vdaan posturing, and has been known to beat him up when he goes too far.

### AKUMAKO

Familiar and assistant to V-Daan and V-zhon, Akumako (lit. 'Satana') is a red tinkerbell with the sensitivity of a dalek. Her favourite pastime is ripping out people's souls, and her ambition is to eat so many that she has to go on a diet. With a small size that makes her ideal as a spy, she has been the cause of many a problem for the Beast Warriors.

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author has used information from NEWTYPE and ANIMAGE and the original anime scripts in writing this article.

With thanks to KSS, Inc., and especially Ms Chika Ogata of their London office

KO CENTURY BEAST WARRIORS © 1993  
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Founding father of manga translation house Studio Proteus, long time anime fan, translator and writer (most notably of the DIRTY PAIR comicbooks), Toren Smith is perhaps one of the most prolific Western names to be associated with manga. ANIME U.K.'s Jim Swallow caught up with him at the recent AUKCON convention in London for a few questions...

*Toren, you're a well-respected comics professional; What made you decide that you wanted to work in comics, right at the very beginning?*

TOREN SMITH: I was in comics from about 1980, but before that when I was a kid, I had this weird uncle who used to give me strange things, like comics and Procol Harum tapes, and I remember those fondly. I quit reading comics when DC cancelled all the Kirby stuff, because I thought 'If this is what comics are going to do, take my favorite stuff and cancel them, then to hell with them' so I quit having anything to do with comics for about ten years. Then I was asked by a friend of mine, Lela Dowling (artist on Eclipse Comics' FUSION title and others) to write something for her; at that time I was writing plays up in Calgary, Canada, which is where I'm from. She said it was kinda like writing plays, so I shouldn't have a problem with it, so I did - it was a lot of fun, and I ended up writing some short stories for Eclipse, getting married to Lela and moving down to California. In 1982 Jim Hudnall, who is now of course writing a lot of stuff for Malibu and Marvel (STRIKEFORCE MORITURI, ALPHA FLIGHT), he and I were computer programmers, and he showed me CAGLIOSTRO'S CASTLE (LUPIN III) which I had never seen before and it just blew my mind completely - 'How can this stuff exist and have people not know about it?'. I thought 'I really want to see this stuff get out to more people', so I got involved in the Cartoon Fantasy Organisation; back in the early eighties the C/FO magazine was marvelous at that time and a lot of people were really getting things done, putting on shows. Jim and I got involved in that, we started our own chapter C/FO Sonoma, and I wanted to do booklets so people could read along with the stories instead of just guessing. That was where it started, watching the anime, and then I heard through Jim there's comics for this stuff as well, and started reading them; Eventually I ended up enjoying the comics more than the animation - that's why I ended up getting the comics over here instead of the animation.

*What were your favorite comics back then? You said you were a fan of artist Jack "King" Kirby - what did you enjoy reading?*

Back when I was reading comics I liked all the Kirby stuff, what was called his "Fourth World" stuff, NEW GODS, FOREVER PEOPLE, MISTER MIRACLE; I'd spend all of my

time in math class drawing Kirby 'swipes' which is why I use a calculator these days! I had a lot of fun with it and when they cancelled it, that was when I totally got out of comics - I read very little else at the time...I read SPIDERMAN, that was back in the glory days, THOR and others, but then I got out of it and didn't look at a comic again until

1980. What attracted me then, 1981-82, were the black and white comics - that was the big boom (in independant comics), and was fortunate to come across stuff like CEREBUS THE AARDVARK and Josh Quagmire's CUTEY BUNNY (which itself was a parody/homage to Go Nagai's CUTEY HONEY).

# TOREN SMITH THE INTERVIEW





*You were president of the fan club...*

Yes, I ran the CUTEY BUNNY fan club for about a year! That's the reason Josh and I don't speak anymore! it was an interesting experience - I still love Josh's work, and I really really wish he would do more, but he tends to have a fairly erratic output.

*You talked about being in the C/FO with James Hudnall; you also both did a lot of work with the video programs at the early Baycon conventions.*

It was Jim's idea to do the first one at Baycon '83 - that was the first one I did a translation booklet for. I was working as a computer programmer at the time, and I'd come in to work at two o'clock in the morning on Saturdays and I'd run off five thousand(!) copies of one page, and come back the next Saturday and run off another - that's how we did the first booklet, it was all secretly printed off on the companies' copiers. Someone who worked for the company years earlier had accidentally ordered all this coloured paper that never got used, so I took it and used it - If anyone has seen that early book, some of them are yellow, some are blue, some are pink...Jim ran the program in a little room with a folding bed and it was packed all the time. The guy running the convention came by and said 'Look at all these people! We've got to do something about this - it's popular.' He gave me total freedom in 1986 - he gave us the room, the funding - he turned me loose on it. We had two rooms linked together, a big projection TV...I'm a bit of an audiophile, I had a hot stereo system, mostly British equipment I might add, and I brought it in and hooked it up; Jim Hudnall had got one of the latest stereo VCR's and laserdisc players, all these laserdiscs from Japan...That was a tremendous success, but unfortunately the next year I was gone, I moved to Japan at that time.

*How do you feel fandom has changed since that time?*

I see a lot more of what I would call 'ordinary people'. Back in '81-'82, you really had to be a maniac! There was no such thing as subtitled stuff, no such thing as dubbed stuff...there was that subtitled copy of CAGLIOSTRO'S CASTLE which has probably done more to build anime fandom in the US than anything else because that was something people could get into because it was subtitled, however poorly. I almost feel like my grandfather - 'Back in the old days we had to watch fourth-generation dubs that looked like they were recorded underwater! Mono sound, no subtitles, no dubbing, you kids don't know how lucky you are!' You had to be a lot more dedicated in those days, more of a maniac. Of course, any sub-sect of fandom that attracts real ferociously dedicated people is going to be a little

peculiar...There were real characters in fandom in those days, not that there aren't anymore!

Things have got a lot more normal, like comics or trading card collecting, something the average person can get into - more mainstream. Some fans resent the loss of their private playground, but for me, not just from a commercial viewpoint, I think it's better because I got into this to help more people see this stuff; you get it on BBC, you get it on the Sci-Fi Channel in the US, more people are going to get into it, more people are going to enjoy it - that means more companies with more money are going to get involved and you're going to see more of it over here, which is what we all want - more and more and more! Money drives the world, and for all of the good intentions and sincerity of the fans, they're not capable of getting the kind of work out that's really necessary.

*Back in 1987, you started translating the manga LEGEND OF KAMUI for Viz Communications while you were in Japan...tell us more about that.*

Seiji Horibuchi, president of Viz in the US, and I were brought together by Fred Schodt (writer of MANGA MANGA THE WORLD OF JAPANESE COMICS, INSIDE THE ROBOT KINGDOM and translator of the GUNDAM novels). We got together, and we were both going after the same sort of thing...We talked for about a year, I introduced him to the people at Eclipse, as this was the way to go with an established American comicbook company. I had already planned to go to Japan, and the plan was that I translate three comics for Viz. I picked out all the comics they did for the first two years, even though I wasn't involved after the first year, they still used to do comics I picked out until quite recently. We decided to do KAMUI because that was similar to the manga that had generated the most interest in the US at the time, LONE WOLF AND CUB (produced by First Comics), and also it was a great story; we did MAI: THE PSYCHIC GIRL because I felt that was right in line with American tastes, and we decided to do AREA 88, which I deliberately chose because it was extreme in style, as a test - how will this go over, what will people think of it? Those of you who've seen it, I think it is to this day the most extreme example of the manga style published in the US. It actually did very well - it was rather ridiculous they cancelled it when they did. I flew to Japan, and it was a great idea, I could interface with people there, it would work out well...But once I got over there they yanked MAI and AREA 88 from me and gave them to Jim Hudnall instead - it was too hard for them to work with me in Japan...So here I was in Tokyo, the most expensive city in the world, trying to live on \$400 a month...To give you an idea of how tight money was for me, when I to Japan I weighed 210 lbs...I came back and

weighed 163...I was living on one pack of noodles a day because that's all I could afford. So, I shopped around and found a bunch of comics we should do, APPLESEED, OUTLANDERS, NAUSICAA and others. Seiji came to Japan and I showed them to him - 'These are the comics we should be doing, these will sell well in the US'; he said 'We're a Shogakukan company, we're just getting started, we have to do Shogakukan material.' That makes sense from a company viewpoint, but at this time Marvel Comics had some people over in Japan shopping for stuff - nothing ever came of it other than AKIRA, but at the time I was very concerned this stuff would get snapped up by the people at Marvel. I told him that if someone didn't do something we'd lose this stuff, and he said 'Why don't you do it?'...I didn't realise what he meant was 'You foolish foreigner, you'll never have any success doing this in Japan but at least it'll keep you busy.' - since I didn't know I couldn't do it, I went out and got them all. I took them to Eclipse, and of course there was the big battle over NAUSICAA which is too sordid to get into in detail, but I have to thank Hayao Miyazaki because he was the one who stood behind me and said 'I want this guy to work on the book' - otherwise I wouldn't have done it. Viz have gone on and done a lot of interesting things and I feel Studio Proteus has taken a bit of different tack, a different line of books that reflect my personal taste, where the Viz books are more of a corporate taste. They're capable of doing a lot of things I would have trouble doing - Anything my company does has to be successful, I have to be really careful because anything I do that doesn't make money means that I sweat when the bills have to be paid, whereas Viz has a little more leeway - they've got Big Mama Shogakukan pumping dollars into them so they can go ahead and try something - 'Let's do MAISON IKKOKU, let's do *Shojo* manga and see how that flies' - they can afford to do that, and I think the market really needs that.

*Tell us a little bit more about Studio Proteus.*

It was basically started by David Lewis and me back in '86 - '87; I was going to a lot of SF conventions and someone told me 'Hey, you've got to meet David Lewis' - he'd been in Japan for about five years, translating books for Kodansha (Lewis did the English-language version of Takachiho's novel THE DIRTY PAIR'S GREAT ADVENTURE). He and some other people had also done the first volumes of LONE WOLF AND CUB and DEVILMAN...I met him at a convention, and he was great, he had the language skills, the contacts, a superb translator and writer. A lot of people don't realise that he's the same David Lewis that wrote all those SF stories in ANALOG...he was nominated for a Hugo Award. We worked together for about a year, and then it became necessary to bring other people in - I ended up working with Dana Lewis, who is every bit as good a trans-





lator and writer as David. As far as lettering and other stuff is concerned I was very fortunate to have Tom Orzechowski and Lois Buhalis, and Tom is one of the top five comic letterers, his work is superb, and he and Lois were definitely interested in these comics. Right from the start I had these people. I had David to handle the translations, Tom and Lois to do the retouch and the lettering, and I made arrangements with Eclipse because I had contacts with them. Everything came together very nicely. As far as getting the rights to things, APPLESEED and NAUSICAA were the first two I got. The reason I got NAUSICAA was because soon after I arrived in Japan I wrote an article for the Japanese STARLOG magazine. My future sister-in-law interviewed me for ANIMAGE magazine and I told her about the terrible things that had happen when they made the NAUSICAA anime into WARRIORS OF THE WIND and she suggested I write it and they published it in STARLOG. Miyazaki read it - it was a scathing indictment of what had happened to NAUSICAA, how it had been butchered into WARRIORS, so Miyazaki called me up and wanted to meet me. We got together and he talked at me for about an hour...Once he gets going he's a real lecturer! Of course, I was sitting there with stars in my eyes - I was talking to Miyazaki, I couldn't believe my luck! At the end of it I said I'd really like to the manga in the US and we won't do WARRIORS OF THE WIND, this'll be the real thing. He was very much for that, and he called up Tokuma Shoten and said 'I'm sending this guy over, cut a deal with him'. With APPLESEED, the translator of my STARLOG article had gone to university with the guy who is now running Seishinsha, the publishers. That was the year APPLESEED won the Galaxy Award at Daicon (Japanese equivalent of the Hugo Award) in Osaka. He got me in to see him, down to Osaka we went and at that time I could say 'Yes, we're doing NAUSICAA', which opened a lot of doors for me...We got APPLESEED. That was the last time it was ever so easy to get in!

*How does the process of bringing a manga to the West work?*

The first thing that happens is I go into a comic store in Japan and see something I like; I look at the spine of the book and see who the publisher is - if it's Shogakukan, things end right there. If it's not, the next step is if this is a pain in the ass publisher or not...some of the publishers over there should be shot! As Han Solo says, 'No reward is worth this!' - that's true for Sunrise and Bandai... I then look at it with the eyes of the American comics market - can we sell this in America? If the answer is yes, then I approach the company, depending on my contacts, maybe through the company or through the artist. Once they say yes, I take it to the US and show it to, in this case, Dark Horse Comics, who we work with almost exclusively now, and if they say go with it,

we put together the contracts. At this point I usually have a pretty good idea of who I want on the book. I get them arranged and the schedule set up - the pages come in from Japan and we get to work. Once we have finished, it's handed over to Dark Horse, who handle distribution, advertising and so on.

*What do you find the best part of the job is?*

Going to Japan and getting blind drunk with people on their money!

*What's the worst part?*

Dealing with lawyers!

*You've done a lot of translation - you've also done some writing, especially the first three DIRTY PAIR comicbooks - would you like to do more?*

Dark Horse has been pestering me constantly to do more writing for them, and I have a few things I'm working on there - it's two things really, finding the right artist and finding the time. When I worked on TERMINATOR: HUNTERS AND KILLERS, I had agreed to do that because I'd be working with Adam Warren on it (Artist on the DIRTY PAIR and BUBBLEGUM CRISIS comics), and he backed out at the last minute - there was a mad scramble to find an artist. First we had Chris Marinnen, who did stuff for Marvel; he lived locally and I thought I'd like to work with him...then he had to back out. We grabbed the first person to come along, Bill Jaska, a nice guy, but he couldn't follow a script if he had a gun to his head! And to make it worse, we re-read the TERMINATOR licence contract and realised we only had time to do three issues instead of four! So I had to re-write everything to fit it into three issues, which was a nightmare. The whole thing was a grisly experience, and it put me off. At the same time, Adam and I had been working on DIRTY PAIR: A PLAGUE OF ANGELS...I don't think the book shows it, but we were at daggers drawn throughout the entire series...there was screaming and arguing and carrying-on over every point in every line of dialogue. By the time we finished, I thought 'We'll let Adam write this himself', which he can do, because he can write really well and he can draw like a God...let's just let him do it and we'll see where he takes it.

*It's interesting that you say that - in many opinions PLAGUE OF ANGELS is the best of the series.*

Yes. The first series we did, I didn't know what I was doing, I'd never written a comic-book series before, just items and one-shots, and Adam didn't know what he was doing, he'd never done a comic book series before - we were just stumbling around in the dark and the first series shows it. The second

series we learnt more how to story-tell, pacing, how much story to put in an issue, and then it was PLAGUE OF ANGELS which we both went into very confident...Then after a couple of months, Adam decided he wanted to do things himself, and rather than waiting until the next series, it turned into a power struggle over who was going to control the direction of the comic...It was a little peculiar in places; the ending is not what I had in mind. If Adam was willing to do it, I'd work with him in a minute - he's brilliant as an artist, a dedicated worker, tremendously well-educated.

Despite the problems, when I worked on HUNTERS AND KILLERS I realised how good Adam had been to work with. I'd love to do DIRTY PAIR again, but it would have to be with another artist, because from now on Adam is going to do things on his own - he's going to do great work.

*What are your current projects at the moment?*

Coming up in March, We're starting HELL-HOUNDS, the APPLESEED DATABOOK, we've got OUTLANDERS EPILOGUE, which is the very last OUTLANDERS story - I promise! We keep turning up more, but I promise this is the last one...we have the DOMINION special (PHANTOM OF THE AUDIENCE) side story which Masamune Shirow did for the graphic album, CARAVAN KIDD, and the final issues of VERSION, which we had to cancel. It took a little too much of a hit from the market and despite the fact it got great critical acclaim, it was just not selling the numbers to break even. Dark Horse would have supported it even if it just broke even, but we were losing money on it. That's only the second series I've ever had to cancel - CYBER 7 was the first one...that's a good track record considering Viz have so far cancelled fourteen series or so. We hope in the future to bring it back - we've had a lot of foreign interest, in Germany and Spain. Unfortunately, we're going to miss the last eight issues...We're lucky that was the only one we had to cancel, after problems in the comic-books market in America. A number of companies have taken greater than 50% hits in sales, companies like Valiant, Image. During the same period, the Dark Horse manga line went up 2.7%...That demonstrates good support for manga.

*Tell us more about the APPLESEED DATABOOK - that a project that's been talked about since 1989.*

The reason why the DATABOOK has taken so long to come out is we were putting it off...it's such a wretched job, to cut it all apart, translate it and put it all together again...we were looking for excuses not to do it!

We wanted to get interest in Shirow back up again before we released GHOST IN THE SHELL, which will be coming out in March

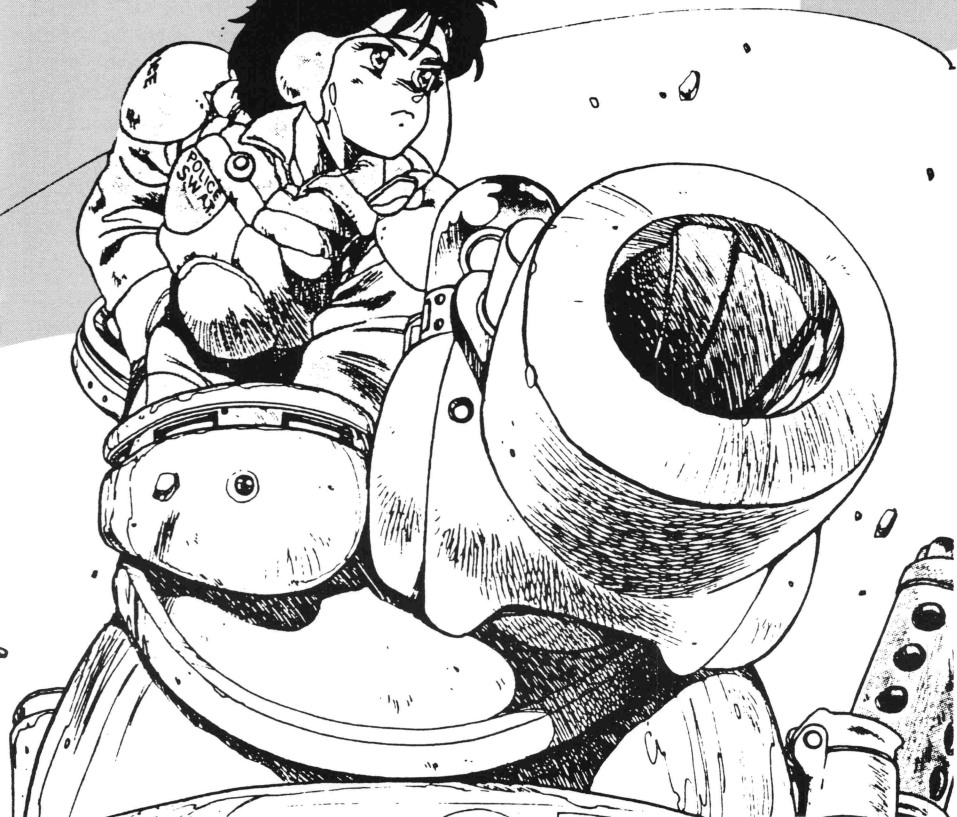




TALK ABOUT GOING THROUGH CHANGES-- HAULED OFF TO AUSTRALIA, THEN **BOOM!** BACK TO TOKYO. AFTER TWO MONTHS, IT ALL SEEMS LIKE A BAD DREAM...

AW, THE WHOLE THING WAS A CRAZY STORY ANYWAY. I ONLY HEARD IT FROM TWO PEOPLE, EIKO AND OSAWAGI... AND ANYBODY COULD'VE FAKED THAT VIDEO. I JUST GOT PULLED INTO THEIR LITTLE CHARADE. DUNNO WHAT THEY WERE DOING IT FOR, THOUGH...

MNCH: MNCH:



on there - the book came out and there were no repercussions. However, because of later problems, the next printing will have those pages deleted, so anyone with the first printing has a collector's item! In the GHOST we are printing, we are going with the new version Shirow has done - the retouch was done by Shirow at his request. We were all a little relieved, because otherwise the book could not have been sold in certain states in the US. That's the first time it's come up, and I don't foresee it as any problem that can't be changed in the dialogue. We're probably going to be doing GUNSMITH CATS (created by Kenichi Sonoda) next year, and some has to be slightly re-written due to the age of one of the characters...We changed an age from 17 to 18 to make it legal.

*What other future projects do you have?*

I can't talk about everything, but we have a solid schedule through into 1997. We will be doing GHOST IN THE SHELL, GUNSMITH CATS, we're hoping to do OH MY GODDESS! to come out in August to coincide with the videos in the US. There's been some delays on the contract for that, and if they are not done in time we won't be able to do it. That's a disappointment for fans, but without video co-marketing we can't be sure the book will support itself. We're going to be doing the second series of DOMINION, almost certainly going to be doing a very unusual project by Shirow called NEURO HARD (Not a manga! NEURO HARD is a "universe" background created by Shirow for other creators to work in...), we're going to restart 3x3 EYES next year - very probably we'll release a budget collection of the issues done for Innovation Comics, and then start the regular series. We're looking at some other things - one is an adaptation of James P. Hogan's SF novel "The Two Faces Of Tomorrow"...the manga was done by Yukinobu Hoshino (SABER TIGER, 2001 NIGHTS)...hopefully we're going to bring that over, first as a series and a later as a collection. There will be a new DIRTY PAIR series (working title FATAL BUT NOT SERIOUS) after Adam Warren finishes BUBBLEGUM CRISIS... Probably Adam will be doing another BUBBLEGUM CRISIS after the DIRTY PAIR, and I can't exactly say what, but we are looking at two other properties to do licenced versions of...We found some good artists, and I haven't wanted to do licenced material unless we had really good artists on it. We will be working a lot more closely with Animeigo in the future as we did on BUBBLEGUM CRISIS, hopefully bringing out some limited series to go along with their video releases.

*Do you have a dream project?*

My favorite manga right now is one called HEBA! HARO-CHAN, which was running in the Kodansha comic MISTER MAGAZINE; It





1995, the colour pages will be in colour...we're using a new computer technique to scan in the pages, remove the Japanese sound effects, putting in the American sound effects and then filling background in...I've seen samples and it's jaw-dropping!

Once Kodansha saw them, they put a hold on any more foreign rights to GHOST until our stuff comes out, because they want to use it. We're all very excited about this new technique.

*Did you translate the DATABOOK in full?*

The DATABOOK comes in several sections; One was the APPLESEED Encyclopedia, almost half the book. That was written by Shirow's editor, and he knows the APPLESEED world better than anyone - he may know it better than Shirow! It's all taken from the manga, and it's pretty much what you can read by reading through the books. If something had to go, that did, because it's terribly expensive to translate, especially as we had Fred Schodt do it, someone really really good. We had to limit what we did, so we took out the Encyclopedia, and that left us with the short story, "Called Game" the mecha section, the Chronology and a few of Shirow's blatherings (Laughter). What we're doing is two forty-eight page squarebound comics, each with twenty-four pages of the short story, and all of the chronology and all of Shirow's essays. When the DATABOOK is collected in one volume about a year from now, we will add in the mecha section, another twenty-five more pages. That will cover everything except the Encyclopedia, because that would have involved far too great an expense.

*What's your standpoint on editing out things that wouldn't translate well to a Western audience, and editing story content in manga?*

A lot of people, especially fans, would prefer

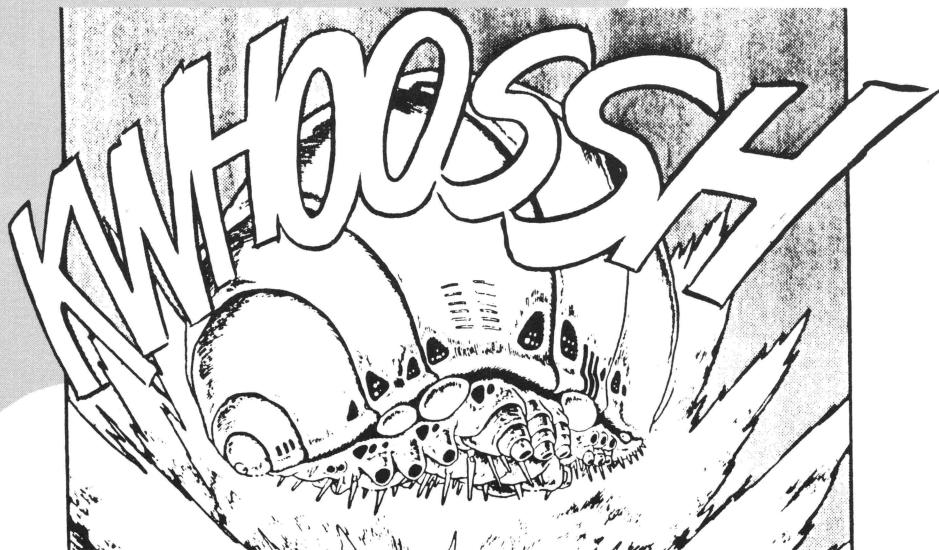
to see what is technically a transliteration - a literal translation of everything everyone is saying with no nod to comprehension by the target audience; if a person makes an inside joke about a Japanese newscaster, you leave that in rather than change it to an American newscaster. That's transliteration, and that's fine for fan projects, fine for a limited audience, students or literary reasons, but if you're selling an entertainment product you have to do a real translation. You always have to keep in mind that for the people reading the book the translation should be transparent - they shouldn't realise they're reading translated material...They should be able to assimilate the intent of the original creator without having stumbling blocks thrown in their way, like the inside joke about the newscaster. In those cases we do change jokes to something that would be understandable to our audience...That's part of translation. You have to be willing to make those changes to make it accessible to the audience. Where I do believe the line is crossed is where you come across a joke and say 'I can write something funnier than that.' That's where mistakes have been made in the past, especially in animation dubbing. Changing jokes, adding jokes - that is anathema. As far as censorship goes, taking things out for sales reasons or legal reasons - If you have a panel showing something that could get some poor sap in a comicbook store in Georgia thrown in jail, you have to decide if you're gonna do this to the guy...It plays in Japan, but what happens to the guy who gets arrested in Georgia? We've been very lucky in that very little of what we have done needed anything like that at all; In fact, the only real censorship that has been done on our books was on 3x3 EYES through Innovation Comics, and that was without my knowledge. In GHOST IN THE SHELL, in the original there are a few pages that are pretty hair-raising (the notorious yacht sequence). Originally (in Japan) the book was supposed to have a warning sticker on it, but Shirow dug in his feet and refused to put the mark

was the story of a country girl from Northeast Japan who comes to Tokyo to go to university and ends up working as a bar hostess in the Ginza...It is absolutely hysterical! It's done by Makoto Kobayashi, who did WHAT'S MICHAEL? and his drawing is fabulous, the story is wonderful...I eagerly looked forward to every monthly release and I'm devastated it's over - In Japan you have series that run for thirty-six, forty, a hundred volumes. This only ran five, and they're thin! I would love to do that...It would sell about six hundred copies, but I would love to do it! Other than that, I'd love to do some of the work by the more classical Japanese artists - I'd like to do a Tezuka comic, or something by Go Nagai, but we're talking about books that won't sell well and it's so expensive to do one of them. These may remain dreams, but I'm always willing to take chances - you may have noticed that there is always one Studio Proteus book running at any one time that it is less commercial than the others; VERSION is a good example. Whether those books succeed or fail, I always try to have room for one book we can take a chance on. Hopefully, as manga and anime become more popular, we can bring more of these in.

*Are you interested in moving into video, subtitling or dubbing?*

There are so many good people out there doing it far better than I could ever hope to do, the obvious thing for me would be to hook up with them, which I have done - I did the subtitle script for VENUS WARS, for U.S. Manga Corps.; the dubbed version from Island World worked off that script. It was fun to work on that - I was given an absolute clear road, which was great and meant I had a lot of freedom on the project. I also worked on BEAUTIFUL DREAMER (one of the URUSEI YATSURA movies) for Animeigo, but they discarded about half of it to go with a more literal interpretation. That was a bit of a disappointment for me since BEAUTIFUL DREAMER is my favorite movie, and I've made quite a study of it... Other than those two, a script that David Lewis and I did a long time ago for WINGS OF ONEAMIS will be used as the base for the dubbed version that U.S. Renditions is working on. We are working with Animeigo on the BUBBLEGUM CRISIS release, and the OH MY GODDESS! release. They will also hopefully be doing a terrific new anime called THE SPIRIT OF WONDER, and we will be translating the manga as well as working on the video. We're hoping to be doing that more in the future with Animeigo and other companies, working closely with them, supervising scripts. But no, Studio Proteus is not going to be setting up a subtitling and dubbing arm - it's a little too cut-throat a business for me!

*Okay, and on that note we'll wrap this up - Thank you, Toren Smith!*



Dirty Pair © Haruka Takachiho/Adam Warren & Toren Smith  
 Demon © Kodansha Ltd/Studio Proteus/Dark Horse  
 Dominion © Masamune Shirow/Seishinsha/Studio Proteus/Dark Horse  
 Version © Hisashi Sakaguchi & Ushio Shuppansha/Studio Proteus & Dark Horse  
 Outlanders © Johji Manabe & Hakusensha/Studio Proteus

There is a vast amount of anime and related material being released at the moment - a situation totally unrecognizable from even a year ago. There is also a growing trend to releasing extended series, and while very rewarding in terms of depth of involvement in the story and characters, they also demand greater commitment, financial and otherwise, from the viewer.

On this front, Manga Video have **The Guyver** (reviewed last issue) which uses the interesting addition of a monthly comic on the back of the sleeve, Kiseki have the TV series **Ambassador Magma**, by Osamu Tezuka, and Anime Projects have begun releasing the wacky comedy series **Urusei Yatsura**. It remains to be seen whether the market is ready for such initiatives yet...

On the movie front **Clash of the Bionoids**, from Kiseki, will serve as a curtain-raiser to the forthcoming release of the **ROBOTECH**

series, not from VIDEO GEMS as originally announced but from Kiseki. It takes the 1984 movie **MACROSS : DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE?** and revamps it for the Western market. It has all the style and grace of Mikimoto Haruhiko's renowned chara designs and one of the hottest mecha ever put onscreen in the transforming Valkyrie. What it doesn't have is much of a plot, but that's a minor quibble. Transforming mecha, cute idol singers, clashing civilisations and space battles crowd the screen and the romantic tangles of the characters create soap opera on a galactic scale.

And a brief mention for **Monster City** from Manga Video: an established fan favourite (under the title **Hell/Demon City Shinjuku**) - a stylish, atmospheric horror movie in which downtown Tokyo gets trashed, yet again, by malevolent supernatural forces. This one comes recommended.

## VIOLENT COP

ICA Projects, 100m cert 18 (live action)

Okay, so it's not technically anime (*well it's not really anime at all!*), but it is interesting to see Japanese popular culture moving out of the 'art' film ghetto of BBC2 and becoming more available in the UK as 'entertainment'. **Violent Cop** is the 1989 first film by director and star 'Beat' Takeshi Kitano, a household name in Japan as an actor, director, author and TV personality, and it has received much critical acclaim. The plot concerns misfit cop Azuma, who finds out that his best friend Iwaki is selling confiscated drugs back to the underworld. Filmed in a detached semi-documentary style reminiscent of the detective anti-hero moves of the sixties, complete with mournful bluesy soundtrack, Kitano has been compared with Clint Eastwood; but is, in truth, more akin to the lugubrious, weary attitude that Elliot Gould brought to the character of Philip Marlowe. Eastwood has an indestructible quality, but Kitano is altogether a more vulnerable, human protagonist. He has outbursts of random violence, is a gambler constantly borrowing money, and has a sister with mental problems he is unable to help. In this genre, the hero usually solves the case, but is not able to solve his own problems. The grimness of the story is balanced by a deadpan ironic humour, however. When asked in a bar what his job is, he replies: 'We sell guns. Mail order'. As the gradually unfolding web of police corruption is revealed, the film builds to a climax similar to those of the Hong Kong director, John Woo. Suffice to say that not many people are left alive at the end... In the words of one of the characters, in *this* movie 'Everybody's crazy'. And in true Japanese fashion, the status quo is preserved at the end after all. An effective thriller, bringing some neat new twists to its familiar theme.

## INCOMING! release roundup

9 May	Guyver Data Two	28m £5.99 cert 15	Manga Video
	Mermaid Forest	60m £8.99 cert 18	Manga Video
	Dangaio Part 1	75m £12.99 cert 15	Manga Video
	Wind of Amnesia	90m £12.99 cert 15	Manga Video
	Violent Cop (live action)	103m £12.99 cert 18	ICA Projects
15 May	Galactic Pirates vol 1, 2, 3	55m ea. £10.99 cert 18	Western Connection
16 May	Overfiend III part 1 (sub)	50m £12.99 cert 18	Kiseki
	Overfiend III part 2 (sub)	50m £12.99 cert 18	Kiseki
	Ambassador Magma 4&5	50m £10.99 cert 15	Kiseki
	Gunbuster 3&4 (sub)	50m £10.99 cert PG	Kiseki
23 May	Urusei Yatsura TV vol 2	100m £12.99 cert 15	Anime Projects
	Riding Bean (dub)	45m £12.99 cert 18	Anime Projects
13 June	Guyver Data Three	28m £5.99 cert PG	Manga Video
	Monster City	80m £12.99 cert 18	Manga Video
	Gunhed (live action)	90m £12.99 cert 15	Manga Live
20 June	Clash of the Bionoids	100m £10.99 tba	Kiseki
	<i>(Macross: do you remember love? (sub) will be released later this year)</i>		
	Black Magic M66	45m £8.99 cert 15	Kiseki
27 June	Guy	70m £12.99 cert 18	Animania
11 July	Guyver Data Four	28m £5.99 cert PG	Manga Video
	Devilman 1	60m cert 18	Manga Video
	Maris the Wondergirl	50m cert PG	Manga Video
	Crying Freeman 5/6	100m cert 18	Manga Video
25 July	Gunbuster 5/6 (sub)	50m £10.99 cert PG	Kiseki
	Ambassador Magma 6/7	50m £10.99 cert 15	Kiseki
	Overfiend III part 3 (dub)	50m £9.99 cert 18	Kiseki
25 July	Urusei Yatsura Movie 4	100m £12.99 cert 15	Anime Projects
	Bubblegum Crisis 1-4 (sub)	£12.99 ea. cert PG	Anime Projects

*(Unfortunately guys: - all information is subject to change!)*





## BLACK MAGIC M:66

Kiseki Films, 45 min, cert 15

A fan favourite since its release, this tight shoot-'em-up echoes the pace and style of ALIEN, with its tough, feisty heroine, reporter Sybelle, its deadly, unstoppable warrior, the M:66 unit whose deceptively innocent marionette-like form conceals an incredible arsenal of killpower, and the hazards of an environment where the enemy can quite literally lurk around any corner. But there are differences from Scott's seminal film, despite its immense influence on this and other anime productions of the 80s. The environment is not the closed system of a spaceship, with a small crew and a finite number of places to run or hide; it ranges over a whole crowded, bustling city and its surrounding woods. And the target isn't selected at random, but fixed by the robot's programming - a teenage girl, the grand-daughter of its inventor, stalked implacably by an irresistible killing machine which looks like a lifesize doll.

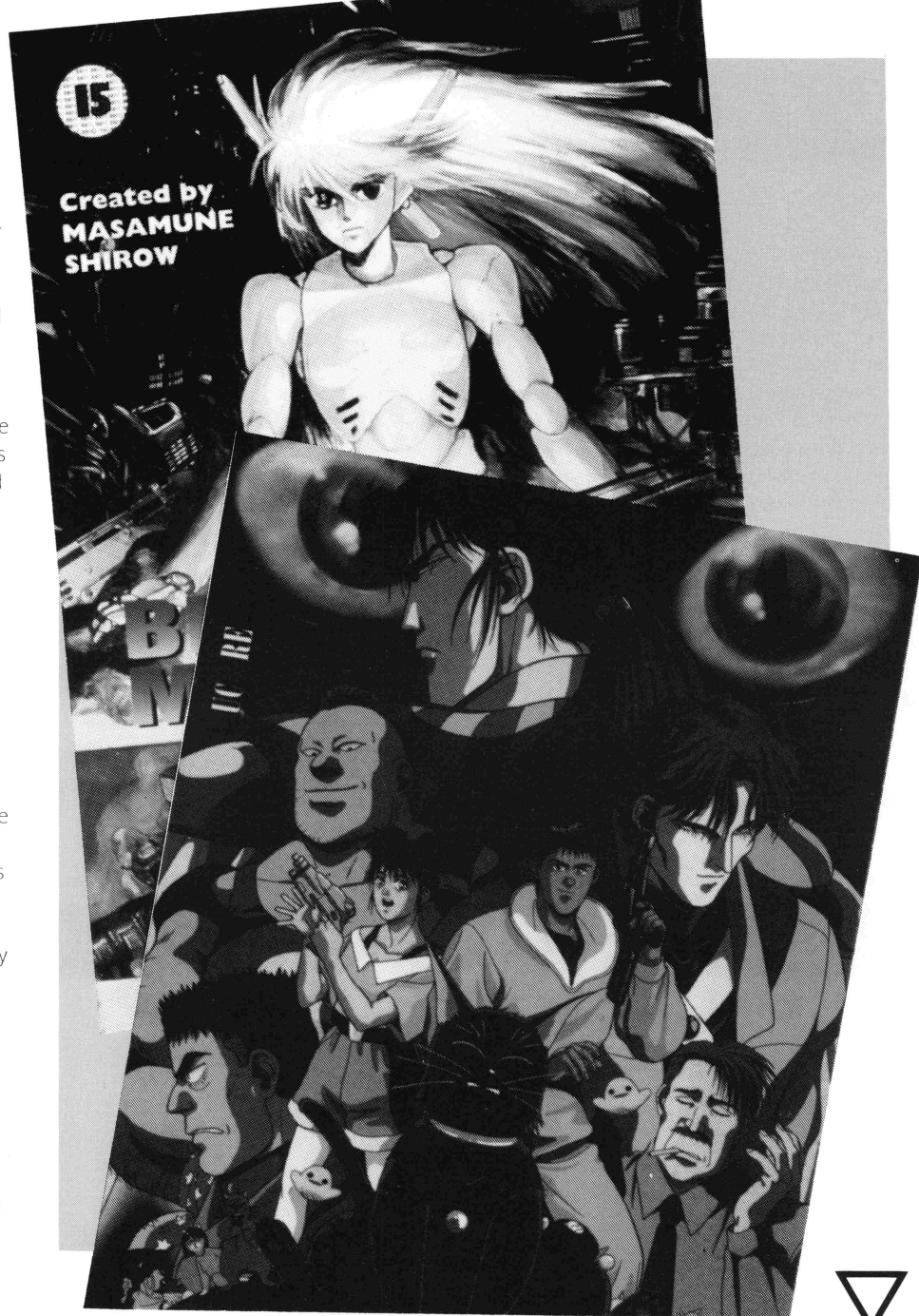
Masamune Shirow wrote and directed the anime, which shares a title but not much else with his eponymous magic-based manga. The perfect control of pace and story development which he displays in his printed works is as perfect here in the faster pace and tighter focus of the OAV form. The characters are sketched in, but sketched superbly, with every detail that counts. The clean, simple design, naturalistic treatment and contemporary settings give the story immediacy and force in today's real world of local warfare and inter-racial conflict. It's man who makes weapons, and man who uses them. The M:66 runs amok by accident - this time; but its childlike innocence of form is designed for deliberate mass destruction, and its programming to kill is put there on our behalf.

The intelligence and thoughtfulness that Masamune brings to all his works shine through BLACK MAGIC: M66; but in the end nothing can detract from its immediate impact as a stunning action-adventure story with a powerful central character. Sure to be enjoyed by any action fan, it has more to offer.

## MARIS THE WONDERGIRL

Manga Video, 50m, cert PG

Retitled after a run-in with Warner and DC, who insist that only the star of their products can be called Supergirl, this RUMIK WORLD tale of longing for romance and all-in wrestling is a complete contrast to MERMAIDS FOREST, full of slapstick humour and poking fun at the Japanese girl's classic dream of a rich, goodlooking husband. Maris' superstrength is always getting her into trouble, and she never has any money, so when she gets the chance to rescue a handsome kidnap victim she jumps at it. However the kidnap isn't quite on the level and Maris ends up in more trouble than she started out. Closely based on the manga MARIS THE CHOJO, this is great fun.



## GALACTIC PIRATES

Western Connection 55m cert 18

Agent Latell of the Pirate Control Police has a problem. He doesn't get along with his boss, who thinks he causes too much 'collateral damage' on his missions (and has the bills to prove it). He also doesn't get along with his partner Apollo, but this is understandable, since his partner is a fast talking streetwise cat with a food fetish. He would dearly like to get on very well with trainee detective Marsha - but she believes he's very nasty to Apollo, who she thinks is cute and cuddly. Apollo also has psionic powers, which come in handy in their conflict with the Pirates, headed by Master Yomei. Master Yomei has his own problems, however, as he doesn't get along with most of his subordinates, who keep trying to overthrow him. This gives Latell time to try and patch up relations with space marine Gunso of the Counter Crime Group. They should be on the same side; but unfortunately Gunso can't stand Apollo. The last member of Latell's team is Dolar - the

supercilious artificial intelligence of his spacecraft. Needless to say, Latell doesn't get along with him either...

With the high production values you would expect from Kitty Films (of Urusei Yatsura fame) and dubbed adequately, if slightly stilted, into English specifically for the UK market by the French distributor Ucore S.A. and Quiet Storm, the series is based on an award winning SF novel by Kambayashi Chohei. Latell is given one last chance to prove himself - go to Saturn and rescue the inventor of the C.A.T. system, a terrifying new weapon which eventually turns out to have reality warping properties and is not completely controllable... From there, this action-packed acid-head comedy takes off into surreal realms as the inhabitants of Mars start mutating into cats. The detectives eventually track down the problem to the virus infected computer of the Space Marines and finally have to battle the entire Pirate space fleet. This is a fun adventure and well worth a look if you like fast paced action and humour.

## GUY : AWAKENING OF THE DEVIL/SECOND TARGET

ANIMANIA, 70 mins, cert 18

The first release on the UK's newest label has been chosen to shock. Following in the footsteps of MANGA VIDEO'S earliest releases, ANIMANIA is going straight for the throat of the juvenile male market where gore and nudity hold out a seductive promise of success. And GUY has gore and nudity in spades, bucketfuls and any other container you care to name. Guy and his sexy redheaded sidekick Raina are mercenaries out to turn a semi-honest penny from any operation that comes their way, and in part 1 they are involved in a seemingly straightforward salvage operation when a mutated scientist puts them on the track of a revolutionary youth drug being developed in great secrecy on the planet Geo. As Geo is a prison planet, the fastest way to get in there is to become an inmate. The warden is a sadist, the staff are all perverts and the scientist at work on the youth drug is, of course, mad. In part 2. DIRTY PAIR fans may notice the homage to Kei and Yuri's outing at the start of PROJECT EDEN, and indeed there are design references to a number of earlier shows throughout the episode.

ANIMANIA's first release is intended as a clear marker for the path the new label plans to take. Label chief Chris Smith wants to release action-packed, gore-sodden, futuristic-contemporary stories with a hard age - animation with attitude, as their logo says. Whether this policy will work in a market where MANGA VIDEO already has a head start in this field remains to be seen. The BBFVC are certainly playing it cautious, removing some of the more explicit sexual violence - for instance, the famous gun sequence - but leaving plenty behind. If you liked LEGEND OF THE OVERFIEND you'll love GUY.



## AMBASSADOR MAGMA

Kiseki Films, 75m cert 15

The first Tezuka release since the now-defunct Mountain Video label gave us PHOENIX 2772 (SPACE FIREBIRD) contains three episodes of the tv series based on the master's manga, which follows the original storyline closely but updates Tezuka's characteristic droll drawing style to give the human characters a near-contemporary look and the settings a naturalistic feel. The darkness and the light, eternally warring, have been sealed away in the depths of the Earth, their spirits kept safe by one family. In this generation, Fumiaki Asuka holds the evil force, Goa, and his daughter, Miki, holds the force for light, Magma. Aliens intent on dominating Earth release Goa from his long sleep and so begins the long conflict as Magma is revived in order to oppose him and the battle is played out between the followers of the two sides.

These first episodes set the scene and introduce us to the supporting characters, as well as establishing a firm moral tone for the whole story. Since these are tv episodes and the story has a long time to develop, things move more slowly than in a 90 minute feature; the benefit is that the characters have more time to fix themselves in your mind, the disadvantage that you know you have a pretty long wait for the ending. Still, it's nice to see some of the huge body of Tezuka Productions' work on the UK market and nice to see Kiseki trying out a longer series on British audiences.

## DANGAIOH

Manga Video 70m cert 15

In the far future, Doctor Tarsan has gathered together three girls (Mia Alice, Lamba Nom and Pai Thunder) and one boy (Rol Kran), all with latent psionic powers (did I hear somebody say 'X?') and erased their memories to make them pliable, in order to combat the evil Captain Garimoth and his henchman, the cyborg Gil Burg. Not knowing who they are and wishing to find their true identities, they initially leave the professor and flee to Earth, where they discover that together they have the power to form the ultimate machine warrior, Dangaioh. They then agree to unite and fight for freedom and justice. The majority of this release is actually episode two of the series - part one has been condensed into a ten minute prologue. Manga Entertainment must have reasons for this, but unfortunately it makes for a rather disjointed story with the episode that introduces all the main characters missing. However, the robot and character designs are gorgeous to look at, as you would expect from the creator of Iczer One, and even if the story is somewhat predictable, it should appeal to mecha aficionados.

## WIND OF AMNESIA

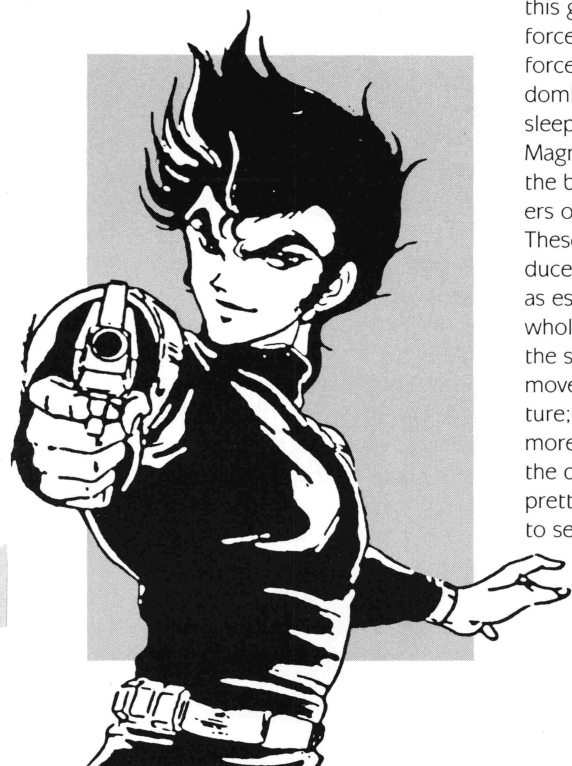
Manga Video, 90 mins, cert 15

The tape arrived too late to be reviewed in our last issue but it deserves some attention. For one thing, it's well translated and nicely acted, and it's a pleasure to be able to encourage Manga Video to carry on with the trend they started with BATTLE ANGEL ALITA. For another, it's a lovely film, a gently paced science fiction road movie with good design and animation from a team of hot talents which includes Kawajiri Yoshiaki of WICKED CITY and MONSTER CITY fame. His trademark monsters occur here and there but for the most part the story concerns itself with big, simple issues like civilisation, love and memory, and deals with them thoughtfully and well. Nice music too.

## MERMAIDS FOREST

Manga Video, 60m, cert 18

Another Takahashi horror tale, based on her longrunning MERMAIDS SCAR manga series now appearing in ANIMERICA, has the classic hallmarks of enormous prettiness and charm, with the gentle, unremarkable surface of everyday life concealing immortals and monsters, strange and hideous things lurking in the shadows of perfect gardens, and seemingly beautiful individuals sometimes possessing hideously twisted souls. Immortals Yuta and Mana have eaten mermaid flesh - but is immortality really forever, or can it be stolen and transferred to someone else in a hideous experiment? And is immortality worth it if it robs to individual of their humanity in the process? Another striking horror tale founded in folklore and everyday life from one of Japan's anime & manga superstars.





by **Jonathan Clements**  
Two live-action video releases that show  
the extremes of **Japanesquerie**

# ALIE

With science fiction's nosedive into contemporary literature almost complete, it comes as no surprise that Philip Kaufman should attempt to depict the Japanese as alien invaders. *RISING SUN* has more in common with the pulp SF of *V* or *ALIEN NATION* than it does with the Orientalism of *BLACK RAIN*. The aliens are among us, the Visitors are our friends, but beneath their benevolent exterior they conceal evil plans for world domination. Alien HQ, the Nakamoto Tower, sits like a spacecraft in the heart of Los Angeles, its every appearance heralded by the beating of ominous temple gongs. An alien technology indistinguishable from magic has literally forced Earth scientists underground, while Earthlings who are prepared to take the Visitors' shilling are set up in pristine enclaves where they have to temper their work to the needs of their alien masters. Eddie Sakamura (Cary-Hiroiyuki Tagawa), the prime suspect, has even taken an Earthling name to lull the enemy into a false sense of security. And, in another twist reminiscent of *V*, the key to defeating the invaders is provided by a half-breed girl (Tia Carrere) who knows the best and worst of both cultures.

In the twilight of alien hangouts, we see the inscrutable beings at play, with their strange pastimes (karaoke) and repulsive eating habits ("UGH! Raw fish!"). As with the Newcomers in *ALIEN NATION*, we are told that they are either unwilling or unable to fully integrate themselves into Earth society. Like the Visitors in *V*, they intend to steal

Earth's treasures before returning from whence they came.

Whereas Michael Crichton's book was openly presented as a polemic, and even included a bibliography for the sceptical, Kaufman's film treatment treads a dangerous line. He offers an alternative view of how 'good' aliens integrate themselves, pitting the Japanese against two immigrant cops in the shape of Connery's "Scotland backyard" liaison officer and Wesley Snipes' Afro-American detective. On numerous occasions, Snipes points out that Africans were once Visitors too, as, for example, when someone mistakes him for a parking attendant and he argues that such an attitude is from "the wrong century". The Japanese, however, segregate themselves within an edifice of their own making, and such segregation is patently un-American. Immigrants are welcome, but only if they play the white man's game. Kaufman's blacks can now be police officers or lawyers, and even those "brothers" who remain in the ghetto will gleefully pull together to aid in resisting the Newcomers.

But it can be argued that the Japanese get off lightly when compared with Kaufman's treatment of women. Although the Japanese are "plundering our natural resources", this accusation is not levelled with regard to deforestation or industrial espionage, but as we see one of the aliens cavorting with an Earth girl. The point is thus devalued when we see that the speaker does not mean the

inheritance of humanity, but his 'right' to exclude other races from sexual access to the white women he regards as his own property. As the Earth girl's resistance to a police raid seems to suggest, she does not view her involvement in such a way, but Kaufman has already planted the seed of sedition, equating the Japanese with the perverse alien rapists of 50s B-movies. *RISING SUN* is heir to the age-old tradition of (supposed) Oriental lust, from Fu Manchu to Ming the Merciless. Sex with the Japanese is depicted as kinky and perverse, supposedly owing to their rejection of Christian values, as if, like the Newcomers of *ALIEN NATION*, their "biological plumbing" is incompatible with that of Earth creatures. In a similar case of sexual paranoia, we are treated with a visit to the Honey Hotel, where aliens debauch themselves amidst a harem of white odalisques. Kaufman's characters would have us believe that the aliens have been hypnotising 'their' women and carrying them off, although the actions of the female characters would indicate that they are consorting with the invaders out of free choice. Would hostility to the presence of so many gorgeous girls be quite as rife if they had bestowed their favours on white businessmen?

Kaufman has chosen to dump much of the reasoned, factual basis of Crichton's book, in favour of his own indicators of an America under attack. Gone is much of the legal, technical and economic argument, to be replaced with the sexual themes mentioned above. Unfortunately, such an act also serves to destabilise the already over-complicated plot, rendering much of the action incomprehensible. The murderer reveals himself not through the protagonists' detective work, but by bolting for the door in the final scene. His motive remains unclear, and the sex crime which we have watched time and time again thanks to the video, is revealed not to have been the actual murder at all. This isn't much of a surprise to the audience, whose suspension of disbelief has already been tested to the limit when the 'corpse' can be clearly seen looking around the room as the coroner's men take their pictures.

Nakamoto's hitmen are, of course, all yakuza, who behave like the SF stormtroop-



# EN NATIONS

ers they have replaced in the popular consciousness. One even finishes giving a radio message as he is stabbed, only hitting the ground when his 'batteries' run out. The only thing that could possibly have been more unbelievable would have been an attack by ninja. Thankfully, there are none of those, but Kaufman has been thoughtful enough to include some teleporting martial artists who delay Connery and Snipes (and the imminent resolution of the plot) with a few minutes of pointless karate.

The plot is kept yet more mysterious by the large soundbites of untranslated Japanese. Viewers without any knowledge of the Japanese language are kept in the dark by a non-subtitling policy that might as well have had all the Japanese actors speaking in Klingon. It could be argued that this gaijin-viewpoint allows the audience to see everything through the eyes of Snipes' character, but the result is an anti-intellectual mistrust of any linguist. The two white characters who claim to understand Japanese are both creatures of questionable loyalty. Bob Richmond (Kevin Anderson) is a Nakamoto minion with a direct radio link to his masters, and a Judas ready to sell his country away. Connery plays a Mr. Lawrence figure, a linguist whose sympathy for Japanese ways provokes accusations of having gone native. Also, Kaufman renders the naturalistic device of untranslated Japanese ludicrous towards the film's conclusion, when Japanese men under great pressure unerringly slip into English for the crucial points in their speeches. Surely a few subtitles would have been better here?

Charges of Japan-bashing were inevitable given the dilution of Crichton's book that any film treatment would have necessitated. But it is Kaufman's additions to the plot, rather than his subtractions, that have turned his film into such a dangerous work. Perhaps you, like me, started off enjoying it immensely, but will the rest of the audience see the joke, or will they take it as gospel?

Westerners have often seen Japan as an alien culture in their midst, but the zaibatsu samurai of 80s cyberpunk have now become something much more sinister. When ALIEN 3 was set in an industrial complex festooned



with Japanese writing, and portrayed the Company rep as an Asian, the scene was already set for the Japanese as a new breed of bug-eyed monsters. SF resonances in RISING SUN were ready for the taking (what TERMINATOR fan would not notice a lead character called John Connor?), but in cutting much technical exposition Kaufman has mystified the science element on which the book relied so heavily. It has been replaced with a psychosexual paranoia rooted in the Japan-bashing of the 1890s (such as Shiel's YELLOW DANGER), reducing the film's 1990s relevance and increasing the likelihood of its dismissal as racist propaganda. Perhaps someone should tell Kaufman that he is living in the 'wrong century'.

Call them Visitors, call them Newcomers, call them what you want, but Kaufman's film clearly defines the Japanese as a Them ready to attack Us. At least Crichton's book was an

attempt at a reasoned argument, but Kaufman has hidden behind it while weaving a racist conspiracy fable that is fated to scar the popular consciousness at a time when the last thing we need is more agitation.

It is only at either end of the film that Kaufman, perhaps inadvertently, offers a positive view of the Japanese influence. The opening scene has a shot of a dog lifted straight out of Kurosawa's YOJIMBO, which ironically demonstrates how much supposedly-American cowboy cinema owes to the bastardisation of samurai epics. And in the film's final shot, as Snipes considers a tryst with Carrere, Connery's ethereal voice admonishes him with the Japanese for 'junior', implying that only a Japanese sense of loyalty will keep him from acting like a faithless gaijin. But such snippets of devil's advocacy cannot save a film that is out to give us a new enemy, whatever the cost.





GUNHED is an altogether different kettle of (raw) fish. Take 3 or 4 Western sf movies, add whatever special effects you can afford at 7-11, mix well and season with mysterious advertising stills. GUNHED has had better press than it deserves. First released with English and Japanese dialogue, approximately half the film was incomprehensible to most Western viewers. No worry, that only added to its exotic quality, and the film was paid the ultimate compliment when William Gibson gave a chapter in VIRTUAL LIGHT the title of 'Cruising with Gunhead' (sic). See a ten-second clip from this film, and you might well think it was worth your time. It has even been pointed out that the film was a big hit in Japan. Well, a film was, but not this one. See if you can guess the difference while I tell you what happens.

In GUNHED we get a multi-racial team, breaking into a complex in search of salvageable junk. They run into the last of the Texas Rangers, doggedly pursuing a runaway cyborg with a super-McGuffin power source. We are then treated to the sight of them going round in circles in a derelict factory until only two are left, along with the obligatory orphans rescued from the debris. The roots in Western films are so obvious as to be embarrassing. The gun squad walking around in the dark is straight out of ALIENS. This is no pastiche like the YOJIMBO scene in RISING SUN, it's mood theft. The entire film is padded out with filler time; defenders might call it suspense, but suspense implies that there's a pay-off. There's no pay-off in GUNHED, just relentless wandering while the soundtrack supplies beating drums. By the time the survivors reach the centre of the complex I was half expecting them to run into a man with a set of bongos, waiting to be rescued.

The characters themselves are ciphers stolen from Western cinema. Bebe is ALIENS' Vasquez, Bombay Boy is Hudson, and Sgt

Nim (Brenda Bakke) is such a ringer for TERMINATOR's Linda Hamilton that she's even borrowed her lips! She has the same walk, the same drawl, and even the same scene when she mothers her co-star, urging him to be her little soldier.

It's not a classic, and it's never going to win any Oscars, but it would be a lie to say that GUNHED wasn't any fun. Word from MANGA VIDEO is that it's a limited-interest release for connoisseurs of trash cinema. It's the first live-action film from MANGA VIDEO, as opposed to the ICA PROJECTS label that pitches its movies at the art-house crowd, so there are no pretensions of grandeur here. So long as you're prepared not to be astounded, there are plenty of things you can do to keep yourself amused. You can even run a sweepstake on the order in which the minor characters get picked off. Here are a few pointers: in Japan it's gaijin before locals, blacks before whites, age before beauty, and ladies first. But remember blondes and children get a special dispensation. Add to that some pretty impressive computer graphics and you might think GUNHED is a good laugh, but that still doesn't explain why it was such a hit in Japan.

You could argue that the Japanese are more gullible, or less given to nit-picking, but you would have trouble proving it. I'm going to stick my neck out and suggest that, quite without their knowledge, MANGA VIDEO were stitched up. The dub they bought ready-made from the Japanese was just that, a dub. I put it to you that GUNHED's real appeal for the Japanese audience was that it was made in two languages, and that with one of them gone, the film falls apart.

Imagine how the Japanese must have felt in the 1980s. After thirty years of imitating the West, slavishly if we are to believe RISING SUN, the cyberpunk wave breaks and they

are informed that Japan is the centre of the world. Suddenly, after such a long time learning English to be 'cool', the Japanese fan was faced with the Japanesquerie of Gibson's NEUROMANCER. There was no escape; if you went to the cinema you'd have to sit through the Japanesquerie of BLADE RUNNER. GUNHED was formed during this cultural climate, when Japanese artists found themselves trying to cope with the new-found marketability of their own culture.

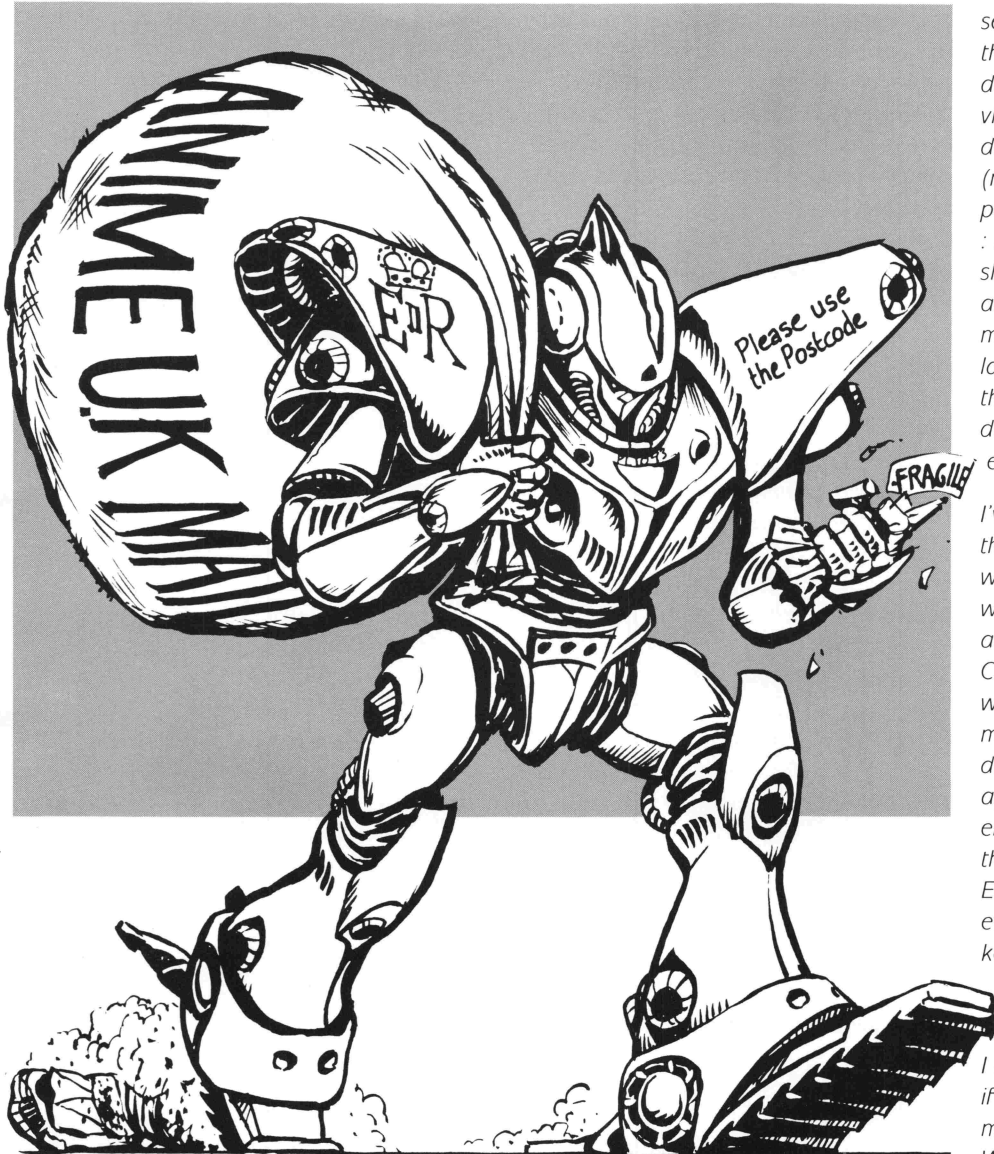
But here we had a film where English and Japanese co-existed, where you could sit there and seethe with envy at a world where a multi-racial team could communicate with ease, swapping languages as they saw fit. Conversations switch from English to Japanese and back again, a glorious impossibility when you consider that the grammars are so fundamentally different. So in the original edition of GUNHED the subtitles were violent. They allowed the audience to follow those foreign sections of the film with the same ease as the bilingual characters. They also seved to paper over the gaping holes in the plot. As long as we have that mystifying element, we can always assume that we must have missed something, and the film's own shortcomings are taken to be OUR mistake.

The audience in Japan had the English dialogue subtitled, and so for them GUNHED retained the element of the mysterious. But when SUNRISE prepared their English-only overseas version, they don't seem to have considered how radically they would be altering the film. Maybe they knew very well, but did not credit a Western audience with the basic literacy necessary to read subtitles. If that's the case, then GUNHED is an apt contrast to RISING SUN, because it demonstrates how pathetic we must appear to Japanese eyes. This time the joke's on us, and no-one's laughing.

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# animail

We want your input! Write to Animail -  
Anime UK Magazine - 3rd Floor - 70 Mortimer Street - London W1N 7DF - England



Dear Helen McCarthy,  
How dear (sic) you, to allow yourself to endorse the newly formed video label, Crusader (as seen on the back of Cat girl Nuku-Nuku). It is wonderful for Crusader to be formed and "roller coast" the Anime movement into the UK, but you should not exploit that fact that this video label has the most marvellous achievements for its dubbing. Well in fact Cat girl Nuku-Nuku just has to be the worst dub ever produced. It really takes the biscuit, everything about it so stereotyped it totally hacks the whole effect of the anime. I have only watched the first 30 minutes and I want my money back.

I hate dubbed films most of the time but I'll admit that Manga Video and even Streamline films have done better. These companies may have experience up their

sleeves but judging from what I seen, the future for Crusader looks bleak in my stand point. You may be one of the most influential person in Anime in this country and therefore have a lot of say. But to continue to sign your name to the back every Crusader video release or, for any other company in this matter, then that's biased and therefore misleading to fans in this country. This may appeal to younger fans but remember where most of the money comes from - the older audience among us. Go back and promote Anime in an independent context, you were doing a great job before.

If this is the new face of Anime, i.e. cheap tacky products, well just forget it!  
MARTIN CHAN, Liverpool, England

Helen :I don't normally reply to letters writ-

ten purely to express a strong opinion unless a reply is specifically requested. After all, you know what you think, and if you were interested in what I think, you'd ask - if you just want to sound off about something you don't need my views cluttering up your path. Your letter, though, seems to me to warrant a reply, even though you make it clear that you very definitely don't want to consider anyone's views or opinions except your own. You don't even seem to think think anyone else (myself included) should consider any viewpoint but your own. You don't like CATGIRL : NUKU-NUKU; fine. But don't tell me I shouldn't like it, or express my own views about it, or offer advice and encouragement to CRUSADER VIDEO or any anime label that requests it, if I think it's the right thing to do. What price independence if it depends on not doing anything someone else might disapprove of?

I've been saying (and will continue to say) that every new British video label should be welcomed and supported by fans, and that we should all give them as much feedback as possible to help them improve. I say CRUSADER should get credit for trying; whether or not you think they succeed is a matter of personal taste. I believe that diversity in the market should be encouraged. This is not simply the only way to ensure that no single company dominates the whole anime market in the UK and Europe, thus cutting down on choice for everyone, but also because an anime market which only caters for the taste of one single group of fans is divisive, exclusive and elitist.

I may work on future CRUSADER releases - if they ask me to - or I may not. What's more, I have also given permission to WESTERN CONNECTION to print some of my comments on the sleeves of their forthcoming releases; I'm working with KISEKI FILMS on anime information phonelines; and I've done consultancy work for another new label planning to launch soon. I don't think any of this compromises my independence or that of ANIME UK MAGAZINE. If you do, you're entitled to your opinion. Pity you don't think I'm entitled to mine.

Maybe the "new face of anime" will include what you describe as "cheap, tacky product" - but those who like CATGIRL : NUKU-NUKU (and there do seem to be quite a few of them) should be able to get the anime they like, just as you can get the anime you like. Meanwhile try getting a refund out of your video shop or swapping NUKU-NUKU for something else.

Dear Helen, Steve and all your fellow co-



hooters at AUK.

I'm just writing to thank you from the bottom of my biomechanical heart for providing the most wonderful time I've had in this life (AND my last one!!) From where I was standing, AUKcon was an enormous success and a good time was had by all. I think CRUSADER are on to a winner with CATGIRL : NUKU-NUKU (and any subsequent releases, for that matter!) It's the funniest anime I've seen since PROJECT A-KO, and as you probably heard, the audience was in more stitches than you would find at a Californian plastic surgery. To be honest, I was expecting the worst from hearing a Liverpool accent in an anime, but it added to the (already hilarious) comedy. Apart from a few small discrepancies in the lip-synch, I really enjoyed CRUSADER's maiden release. DIRTY PAIR was also a (literal) riot. I totally agree with you that, if someone WERE to unleash the Lovely Angels onto PAL VHS, they would need to get two very damned special voices to play the lovely First Ladies of anime.

Before I sign off I'd like to say hi to a couple of people - a guy named Shaun (don't know his surname) without whom I would've been meandering round olde London town for the rest of the century, and fellow comic artist and dojinshi co-hooter Harry H. Healy, who I didn't meet at Victoria station 'cos I didn't recognise him! Sorry, H!  
WAYNE GRATTON, c/o The Misty May Fan Club, Stoke-on-Trent, England

Helen: *Well, it seems Crusader are pleasing some of the people, some of the time... Shaun, and any would-be fanzine contributors, if you want to contact Wayne see his address in the FANSCENE ROUNDUP section under the announcement of his and Harry's new fanzine.*

Howdy,

You must have been very happy putting issue 13 together - anime is REALLY arriving here now - just needs a little more shelf space in the video stores, and most importantly, some tv coverage! It is unfortunate that so many anime fans either are not aware or do not care that both MOOMINS and ALFRED J. KWAK are anime - although ANIME UK has indeed accepted Alfred's bona fides.

I have to disagree with the review of NUKU-NUKU - I thought it was much better! The actual dub quality was quite acceptable and I actually thought Nuku-Nuku's voice was highly appropriate (sorry!)

Just before issue 13 arrived I received a subtitled copy of THE ENEMY IS THE PIRATE and that is one I shall be buying on

UK release as GALACTIC PIRATES - note of despair : WHY when a title is changed like this can't we have a little note on the video cover with the original title? Changing titles CAN result in lost sales if there isn't a useful magazine like AUK to tell you about it... While the price of GUYVER videos is low, so is the program time - how can anyone release a video under 30 minutes? What is wrong with bringing out a 2 or 3 hour anime video? Crusader can make a 90 minute video - copying costs per minute are lower, distribution costs are lower ... Look forward to seeing a centrepiece spread of ALFRED J. KWAK (dare you!) STEPHEN SHAW, Stockport, Cheshire, England

Helen : *All our reviews feature the reviewer's personal opinion so obviously not everyone will agree with the review. However most people seem to have enjoyed Nuku-Nuku as much as, or more than, we did! I'm sure all anime companies will note your comment about original titles. Many of them have only recently become aware that many UK fans are very well informed about the Japanese industry, so they've really only just realised that you might want this information. As for THE GUYVER's pricing and that of other videos, each company has its own policy and varies its prices according to the particular title; but all of them want you to buy more anime, and all of them respond to your opinions as expressed by your purchases. In other words, if you want longer tapes or lower prices for shorter ones, write to the companies concerned and vote with your pound for the items you think are good value.*

Dear Anime UK,

Regarding the letters page in issue 12, I've also noticed strange things happening in freeze frame in PROJECT A-KO, usually when A-Ko is running through Agent D, but curious events are not just confined to slo-mo. At normal speed, several odd things happen, too. One example is when C-Ko offers AKo and B-Ko lunch in the city while the aliens are landing, B-Ko performs some strange aerobics with a pair of fans! These occurrences are not just confined to PROJECT A-KO either. During the opening sequence of BUBBLE GUM CRISIS 1 see if you can spot the plug for a well-known beer in one of the helmet HUD views, while in CRISIS 3 the GENOM map display has some oddly-named locations such as "Hollywood" and "Meg Ryan", plus character names from TOP GUN! Maybe you should set up a special column dedicated to spotting these strange anime phenomena ...?

Finally, I have a couple of queries of my own. First, I've heard MANGA VIDEO are planning to release MOBILE POLICE PATLABOR. Can you confirm this? Secondly, is there any chance of a STAR FLEET/X-BOMBER article? Before I read the feature on Nagai Go in ANIME U.K., I thought I was the only person in Britain who remembered it!

JUSTIN PALMER, Devon, England

Helen: *Yes, MANGA VIDEO are definitely planning to release PATLABOR THE MOVIE but this may not be for some time as they have acquired so many titles that it will take a while to release them all! And yes, we are considering a STARFLEET/X-BOMBER article (you're not the only fan - Steve Kyte has a soft spot for the series too) but at present we haven't scheduled anything for publication. So much is happening on the British anime front that it's getting harder and harder to fit everything in to the magazine!*

Dear Helen-sempai,

I was surprised when I first discovered all of MANGA VIDEO's titles are dubbed. Considering that, over here in the States, US MANGA CORPS is releasing many of their dubs, you'd think they'd return the favour and release some USMC subs in the UK. It's up to the British fans to write to them and, hopefully, get some results. I could write to them but, as an American, I'm hardly a potential customer. I only hope other companies don't emulate what PIONEER's been doing (in the USA). I had my reservations about a bilingual (Analogue track: English dub, Digital track : original Japanese) Laser Disc with subtitles via closed captioning to begin with. Aside from the fact that there are many fans who have neither LD players nor closed caption decoders, closed caption lettering lacks the personality of subtitles, with their choice of typefaces and colors, and the black background blocks out more of the screen than even early US RENDITIONS subs. That turned out to be the least of my worries.

The packaging for PIONEER's TENCHI MUJO! is completely identical to the Japanese version (a sticker on the shrinkwrap being the only English translation) and the disc includes the original Japanese inserts, plus an English translation - but alas, no liner notes, which could have been useful ..) This would indicate they were aiming for a "fan" audience, but everything else indicates otherwise. As far as the dubbed version goes, as one of those fans who insists on subtitles, it's not really my place to criticize dubs. It's up to the fans who want dubs to tell the compa-

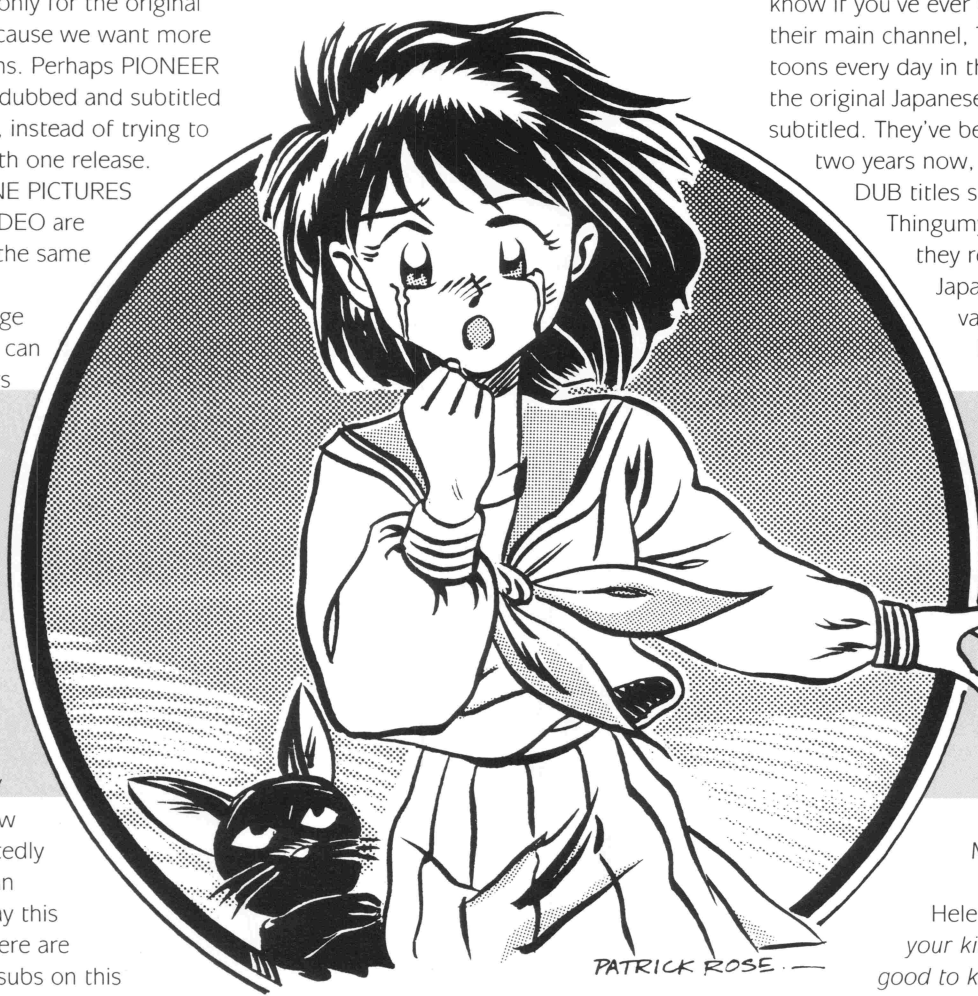
nies what they prefer. Unfortunately, the "closed caption subtitles" are identical in every respect to the dub script, including additional dialogue, blunter foreshadowing, and lines which were re-written to match the lip movements. On top of that, it's "traditional" closed captioning, complete with sound effects, grunting & screaming, offscreen voice cues, and the occasional missing word or phrase. While I understand that the hearing impaired should also be able to enjoy Anime, it's the height of conceit to pass it off as subtitles. Many companies seem to forget that fans want subtitles not only for the original voices, but also because we want more accurate translations. Perhaps PIONEER should release the dubbed and subtitled releases separately, instead of trying to please everyone with one release. Worse, STREAMLINE PICTURES and possibly VIZ VIDEO are planning on doing the same thing.

How can fans change things? Again, they can write POLITE letters (don't use any words that can be spelled "\$%#!"). They can also use their buying power. If you don't like dubs, or what PIONEER's doing, DON'T BUY THE PRODUCTS! If a professional subtitle is available, BUY IT, don't just borrow and copy it! Admittedly it's easier for me, an American fan, to say this considering that there are more professional subs on this side of the Atlantic and in many cases, when the only professional version is dubbed, we can get fans-subtitled copies. Still, it's the best weapon Otaku on both sides of the Pond have. By the way, I liked Fred Patten's article in issue 12, but I wish it would have mentioned some of HARMONY GOLD's pre-Macek attempts, such as CAPTAIN HARLOCK AND THE QUEEN OF 1,000 YEARS, where footage from HARLOCK was combined with footage from QUEEN MILLENIA to make it appear that the former was fighting the latter! Subtitledly yours, E. BERNHARD WARG, Pennsylvania, USA.

Helen : PIONEER LDCE are taking American reactions to their releases into consideration in planning their

UK/European strategy, so I'm sure your comments will be of interest to them. However you're right about the importance of communicating our views to anime companies - if fans don't tell them what they like and dislike, how can companies take their views into consideration?

Dear Helen,  
I would like to begin by saying that magazines such as ANIME UK are essential. I hear you say thank you? Don't mention it. The reason is simple : manga and anime are very difficult concepts to grasp for



people who are just beginning to get interested and if one was to rely on Manga Video it would be easy to assume that anime is just about crude cartoons filled with sex and gore. Who would know, for example, that the series MYSTERIOUS CITIES OF GOLD could be included? A novice wouldn't - not unless he read your magazine. You must admit there is a cultural gap, and Western audiences will need time to be able to assimilate the subject into their own culture. If you could only see the funny looks I get when I read your magazine on the train, or a bus ... On the whole manga is known as 'irresponsible' and while it can be argued that its irresponsibility does attract people to it, it should be remembered that it is

the wrong impression to have when entering the world of manga and anime. There is more, so much more to it than sex and violence, and magazines like ANIME UK are vital to help the newcomer understand. Apart from your ANIMAIL column, would it be possible to state beforehand a topic which you would open for discussion in your magazine, inviting your readers to give their point of view on the subject? Would this not involve your readers more in the magazine?

Also, I would just like to say that Britain's choice of cartoons is sadly lacking. I don't know if you've ever been to Turkey but their main channel, TRT, airs anime cartoons every day in the summer. They have the original Japanese voices, everything is subtitled. They've been doing this for over two years now, and although they

DUB titles such as Greeny Mutant Thingumyturtles Ninjawotsit, they refuse to dub the Japanese ones and their variety is huge.

Lastly, have you ever heard of a film called

THE AFTERMATH? It is about the after-effects of a nuclear holocaust and the film uses animation which resembles Japanese artwork.

It was shown recently on Sky Movies Plus. Yours cheerfully, ALI YILDIRIM, Coventry, West Midlands.

Helen : Many thanks for your kind words - it's always good to know readers' views, and especially when they're flattering ones! I like the idea of a pre-arranged discussion topic, along the lines of THE GREAT DEBATE - SUB OR DUB? in issue 11 which brought a terrific response, so watch out for the launch of ANIME SOAPBOX next issue! As for THE AFTERMATH, the animated footage comes from a rather beautiful film called ANGEL'S EGG; I've yet to see the Aussie version with its live action footage, though!



NOTE : ANIME UK MAGAZINE welcomes readers' letters, but if you want a personal reply or an answer to any questions, you should enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a reply.



**HEY KIDS!** Would you like to see your writing/artwork in print? Would you like to help the cause of UK anime fandom (albeit in a small way!) or have you simply got nothing better to do with your time? Well, WE NEED YOU!! Myself and Harry H. Healy are in the early stages of setting up a dojinshi (fanzine) and we need YOUR help to supply us with articles, synopses, artwork (quality photocopies are best as originals cannot be returned), opinions and ideas. I'd also like to hear from fellow fanzine editors, to give me some advice on the perils and pitfalls of dojinshi editing! Any help, advice and contributions will be greatly appreciated and appropriately credited. Please write to : WAYNE GRATTAN (Dojinshi Co-Ed), 81 Waverton Road, Bentilee, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs., ST2 0QZ.

**ANIME K.U.** is starting up for the 94-95 academic year in Kingston Uni under the able guidance of Chris Norman and Moon Ken Wong. Anime will be shown every Sunday in the common room at House 54, Clayhill Halls, on the campus, and you can contact Chris on email SJ\_D025@TITAN.KING.AC.UK or in House 54 Room E, and Moon on email AP\_C202@TITAN.KING.AC.UK, or in House 54 Room B.

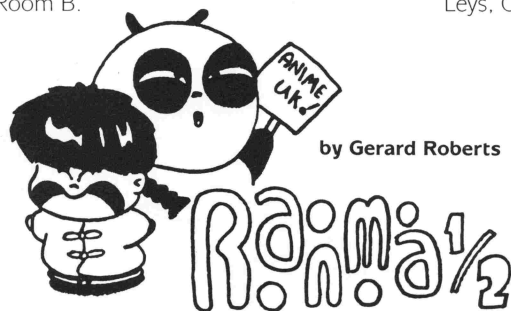
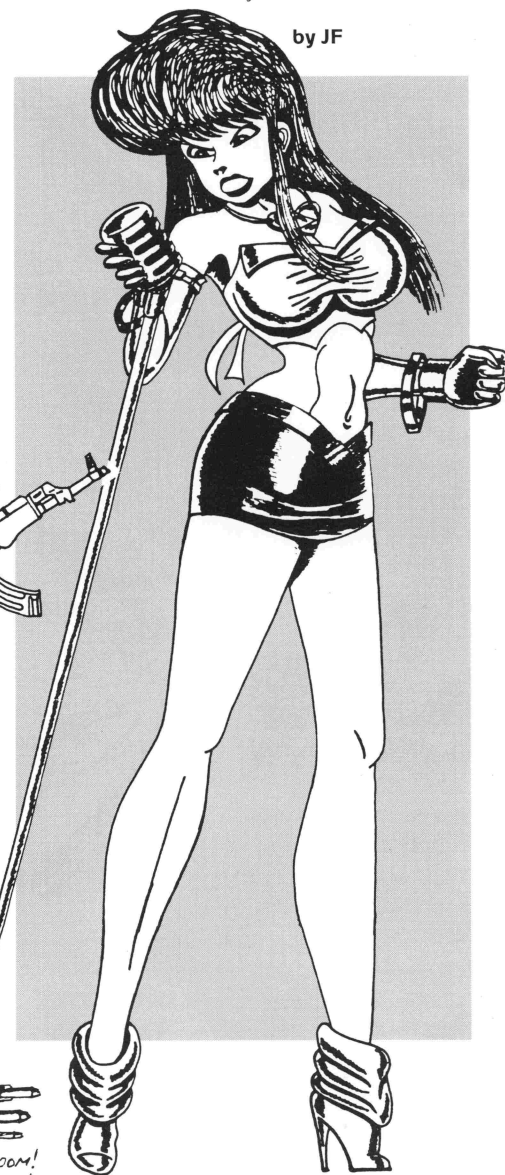
# FANSCENE ROUNDUP

**VOICE ACTORS AND MANGA ARTISTS/WRITERS** - ATTENTION! Josh Clark, editor of ANIMENIA, has two new projects which need your help. First of all, he's working on TWO animated films for DeConTanimeT and wants prospective voice actors to get in touch as soon as possible. Secondly, he's setting up a "doujinshi apa" - not devoted to but consisting of a shared-universe manga strip to which each participating artist/writer will add a bit at a time. It aims to provide feedback, practice and fun. For details of either project send an ssae to JOSH CLARK, 2 Birkdale Drive, Immingham, Grimsby, S. Humberside, DN40 2LB.

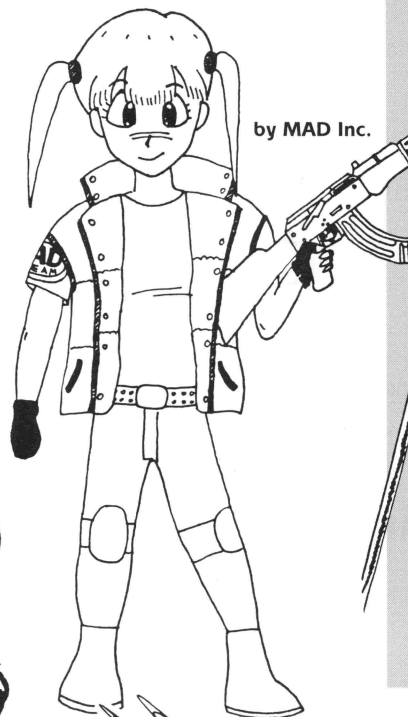
AND YES, IT'S YET ANOTHER NEW FANZINE - **IRRESPONSIBLE PICTURES** is its name and you can get a copy for a small fee - exactly how small is not yet finalised but send an ssae to find out to editor Andrew Chesterman, 3 Wingate Close, Blackbird Leys, Oxford, OX4 5BL.

**FINNISH FANDOM** - Toni Jerrman, Junailijankuja 1 B 29, 00520 Helsinki, Finland, wrote to me with a copy of the largest anime and manga feature yet published in Finland. Toni has also spoken on national radio and at the largest Finnish sf convention, and says "I just thought you might like to know that there are anime and manga fans in Finland too, though we have to depend on the English translations because there aren't any Finnish ones!"

by JF



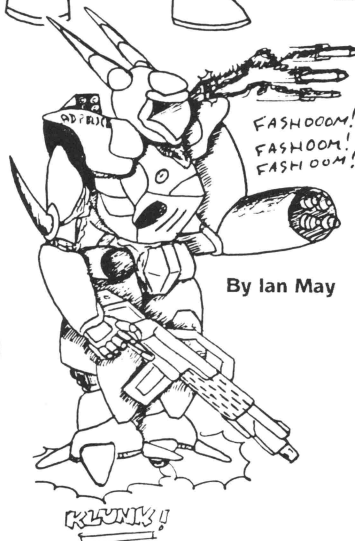
by Gerard Roberts



by MAD Inc.



by Harry Healy



By Ian May

## anime EYECATCH



# ICED \* BANANAS

# おいしい

\* Ah Dishii

Ah delicious

## INGREDIENTS

makes 8

- 4 firm bananas
- 4oz plain chocolate
- 8 long cocktail sticks or skewers
- 8 8-inch squares of tinfoil

① Cut the bananas in half and stick a skewer in each to make a handle.

② Wrap each banana loosely in a square of foil, closing the edges firmly. Put the bananas in

the freezer for at least 24 hours.

③ Break the chocolate into small pieces and melt in a pan of hot water, stirring until smooth.



④ Unwrap a banana and spread a thin layer of chocolate over the surface.



It will set firm on the frozen banana.

⑤ Carefully rewrap in the foil and replace in the freezer until you are ready to serve. Eat while still frozen.



# アニメ ANIME UK

MAGAZINE

ネオクストイノシユ- ➔

CYBER CITY OEDO 808

ANIMATED CLASSICS OF JAPANESE LITERATURE

• ON SALE • 1st AUGUST 1994

THE FRED SCHODT INTERVIEW

## ANIME GALLERY

Featured in this issue is one of the classic OAV series, GUNBUSTER. Part drama, part comedy, part pastiche, this six part series follows the progress of novice pilot Noriko Takaya as she tries to follow in the footsteps of her father, who has been missing since he first made contact with a malevolent alien lifeform in deep space. With character designs by Haruhiko Mikimoto and featuring the notorious (and much imitated) "bouncing bustline" sequence, this release set Gainax well on the way to the success they now enjoy. This picture commissioned from manga artist, Fox.



